



SOWETO

...but GOD!

Rev. Clarke L. Gittens



“The soldiers are coming! They are shooting!”

The 39 year old mother could hear the confusion in the street outside the school near her home. She rushed out to see what was happening. It was awful. Parents were running to the school to fetch their children. Others came rushing out of the building dragging their children with them. Noise and shouting filled the air...

Fear was written on many faces...

Then her attention was drawn to her neighbour's house. She saw that her neighbour's three daughters were breaking the windows of their own home.

“What are you doing?” she called to them. *“We want to kill our mother!”* came the reply.

“But why? She is your mother!” cried the horrified Z., who is herself the mother of several children.

These three girls were possessed by the spirit which overcame so many of the young people of Soweto on that dark day, the 16th of June 1976.

Just then an aunt came on the scene and tried to stop the girls. Z. ran out to help her. As they approached the house, one of the girls whipped out a knife and threatened the two women: *“This is none of your business! Get away!”*

The two women were helpless and in real danger. They had to retreat. Z. invited the aunt into her house, and a little later went out again, feeling that she had to pray for the girls. This was too much for them. Suddenly she felt a sharp pain in her leg - they had thrown a brick at her as she stood praying. Their strange anger was now centred on her. They cursed her and threatened to burn her house down.

For a moment she was terrified and wanted to run. But she realised that that would only make matters worse, they would pursue her and kill her. She remained calm and slowly walked back into her house where two of her own frightened children met her. *“Don’t be afraid,”* she said calmly. *“Come, let us pray!”*

This took place on the Thursday morning. That same evening there was a prayer meeting for young people in her home. She told the children about the three girls and asked them to pray for them.

The next morning their mother came to thank Z. for what she had done the previous day. She was, however, still very frightened about what had happened. Z. saw her deep need and began to tell her about the Lord Jesus.

It was a wonderful moment when the two women prayed together and the neighbour, in her need, opened her heart to the Saviour! This formerly frightened mother was now filled with the abundant joy of Jesus.

The riots had led to her salvation. Satan had overreached himself. Once again he was overcome by the One who has conquered him on the Cross.

On the Saturday evening one of the daughters came back to her mother, she wanted to ask for her forgiveness.

Soweto ... but God!

Clarke L. Gittens

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Mr. E.P.H. von Staden, Bsc. (r), “Omm Hans” to his many friends, was called by God in 1943 to found and lead the Dorothea Missio. Since then he has given his life to winning men and women to Jesus Christ in Soweto as well as in many other urban black areas in Southern Africa.

The Rev. C.L. Gittens (l) is minister of Trinity Prebyterian Church in Klerksdorp in the Western Transvaal. He has a keen interest in photography and journalism. For several years he was editor of the newspaper ‘Encounter’ in his spare time, and is well-known for his conservative evangelical convictions.

This book is dedicated to the workers of the Dorothea Mission and to all who are working among the urban blacks of Southern Africa to win them to a living faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

To God be the Glory!

Preface

SOWETO...

a name almost unknown, even in South Africa, until a few months ago... but now a household word all around the world. The events of and since the sixteenth of June nineteen seventy six have ensured that Soweto, and the urban black peoples of South Africa will never again be overlooked or ignored.

But just what is Soweto?

Unfortunately, too many people in South Africa have reacted to the disturbances like a man rudely awakened from sleep who instinctively sees the clamour that has wakened him as a threat. Too many South Africans have come to see Soweto as a dangerous place inhabited largely by troublemakers and potential terrorists.

The reason for this is not hard to find, for the vast majority of us are completely ignorant about the true nature of this city and the issues that are at stake in "*the problem of Soweto*". Information about Soweto is not easy to come by. Apart from press reports and articles in newspapers and magazines (which have tended to concentrate on the sensational and to ignore the 'ordinary' side of life in the townships) there is very little published material from which the average person can get a balanced and objective insight into the life of this city and its inhabitants.

Before June 1976, such space as the newspapers gave to Soweto was largely confined to reports of the violence and crime there, or to articles on the lack of housing and attendant social problems, since that day we have hardly had a day but some prominence has been given to some or other disturbance.

The inevitable result is that not many people are able to see the situation clearly and objectively. From such information as they have they tend to assume that the problems of Soweto are merely social or political, and that everything will be solved if only the urban blacks can be given a 'better deal'.

There is truth in this assumption, but it is too simplistic. History has shown us again and again that social and political schemes do NOT solve basic human problems such as are evident in the Soweto context. We need to bear in mind that what we see there is only a small part of something much greater, and

to realise that if we spend too much time examining the trees we will forget about the forest. To focus our attention on just a few aspects is necessary, but it can be misleading, for those aspects can very easily draw our attention away from the real problem and blind our eyes to the eternal issues which are at stake and the true nature of the battle that is being fought in the streets of one of the most important cities in Africa today.

If you are a born-again Christian, a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, then you must be aware that the truth of the matter is that the heart of this conflict is not political or social or even cultural. The obvious and very serious problems in those areas in the life of our country are only symptoms of something far worse, a disease of the souls of men and women of all races. From our understanding of the Word of God we must realise that what is taking place in Soweto is a microcosm of the titanic struggle that is going on throughout Africa and the world today, a desperate battle in which the prize is the eternal destiny of multitudes of men, women and children. If the battle is lost, then countless souls for whom Christ died will be condemned to exist without hope and without any knowledge of the love of God in this world and for all eternity.

It is a sad fact that for too long Christians have been content to sit back and watch the futile efforts which have been made to solve the “Southern African Problem” with man-made ideas.

Social and political poultices of all kinds have been applied to the hurts; political parties have multiplied, well-meaning social organisations of all kinds have sprung up with their various patent remedies, but the “patient’s” condition has become worse rather than better.

Much worse, and much more ominous is the fact that more and more of these proposed ‘solutions’ include violence as a necessary and inevitable ingredient... the militant philosophy of Marxism is being forced upon many unhappy souls in various parts of Africa today, and it is all too clear that many people, even in South Africa, would welcome a communist-style “liberation” of the whole of the subcontinent.

Sadly, not even the Church has been able to remain free of the moral and spiritual confusion of our day. Over the past ten to fifteen years we have witnessed the introduction of several strange and bizarre “*theologies*”, the outcome of years of rationalism, humanism and modernism in seminaries

around the world. Several of these man-centred teachings have been invented in an effort to make the Church “*relevant*” to the social problems of our day. We have had Existential theology, Black theology, God-is-dead theology and various Revolutionary theologies served up in the attempt to remake the Church into what men would have it to be. Inevitably the stage was reached in the early 70’s when the World Council of Churches took a decision to give active support to various “*Liberation Movements*” in the name of Christianity.

Naturally, this kind of “*Christianity*” has enormous appeal to many people, especially those of radical and revolutionary tendencies who see violence as the only way of solving the problems of Southern Africa. But we find that in Soweto, the ordinary ‘man in the street’ finds nothing in that kind of religion to meet the needs of his life and the hunger of his soul for peace with God and his fellow man, for all of these programmes, philosophies and theologies suffer from the same weakness - they are all attempts to get rid of the weeds without touching the roots.

Bible-believing Christians know full well that the root of the complex social ills of our day is nothing other than the age-old disease called SIN, and that it is only when this has been dealt with in the human heart by the transforming power of God’s love in Jesus Christ and men and women have experienced the cleansing, regenerating power of that precious blood that there can be any hope of a real reconciliation between man and man and the possibility of “*meaningful change*” in our world and its social structures. The Word of God teaches us - and history underlines the fact - that while people (whether black or white) are living in sin and in enmity towards God they must inevitably be alienated from each other. In sinful pride they will practise injustice towards each other (“*Do the other fellow before he does you...*”), and will oppress anyone over whom they have power, regardless of race or colour. This is being demonstrated only too clearly in countries all over the world today, especially in “*liberated*” countries in the third world. This is simply a fact of life, that where men and women have no experience of God’s love and forgiveness there must be wrong, resentment, hatred and violence... a vicious circle which only God can break.

This book was born in the heart of a man who has given his life to the work of winning men and women in Soweto as well as in many other black townships in Southern Africa to faith in Jesus Christ. Mr. H. von Staden BSc. (“Oom Hans” to his many friends), founder and leader of the Dorothea Mission, has been working in the townships which make up the Soweto complex for

over thirty five years. With his fellow workers (both black and white) he has conducted many tent missions and a great deal of door-to-door evangelism in this area as well as in many other of the townships of Southern Africa.

The result is that he has come to know the urban blacks of the subcontinent very well indeed, and has come to love them with a deep passion for their spiritual welfare, an intensity which reminds one of the apostle Paul's concern for the converts to whom he wrote the inspired letters of the New Testament.

When the riots in Soweto broke out in 1976, Oom Hans was on holiday in Natal. He testifies that the news of the riots plunged him into a state of despair which lasted for almost a year. He felt that his life's work had been undone, and that the forces of evil had won an overwhelming victory. However, he states, the Lord dealt very graciously with him and enabled him to see that far from being lost to Christianity, Soweto has in fact become a challenge to all believers in South Africa, an opportunity for the power of God to be demonstrated to the world.

This book is an attempt to bring home to Christians of all races and denominations in Southern Africa the challenge of the urban black peoples at this time, and of Soweto in particular; to try to bring home to you the truth of a statement which motivated me to undertake this writing, a statement which was made to me by Church leaders in Germany, in Switzerland, in various places in South Africa, and finally by Oom Hans himself, "Soweto is the key to Southern Africa. The battle will be fought and won or lost there, not on your borders."

C.L.G.

Klerksdorp, December 16th 1977.

Acknowledgement

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in the preparation of this book.

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archives of the Dorothea Mission provided the photographs.

Above all, I am indebted to the many kind and patient
Sowetans that I interviewed. I did not see many of the great and
the influential, but the men and women who shared their hopes
and fears and experiences with me are the salt of the earth.

Foreword

Mr. H. von Staden BSc.

For a considerable time it has been my conviction that there should be a special book to lead Christians of South Africa and elsewhere more deeply into the real and dreadful significance of the riots which began in Soweto on 16th June 1976. I felt that this is possibly the most important date in our history since Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape in 1652.

I was convinced that the riots have created a new situation in South Africa. It might mean the beginning of the end of Christian Civilisation. Mighty prayer for Soweto must be mobilised. More intimate knowledge of this black city will help to generate such prayer. A book with a spiritual point of view was a must. My soul was greatly burdened about this.

Circumstances prevented me from undertaking it myself. Unexpectedly the Rev. Clarke Gittens came to visit me. Until recently he was the part-time editor of the newspaper, 'Encounter', to which I subscribe. For years I have recognised his journalistic abilities and the wide range of his knowledge, especially with regard to the spiritual effect of South African affairs. He is wide awake to psychological Marxist attacks, not least on our blacks.

In 1977 Mr. Gittens visited West Germany where he was subjected to close questioning on developments in Soweto and Southern Africa by leaders of the Church in Germany. I believe that he was well able to answer wisely. At the same time he inwardly grappled with the most burning questions of our country in this day.

I shared my burden concerning a book about Soweto with my friend. He immediately expressed a willingness to tackle such a project, and with God's help he has produced this excellent book. No doubt it will serve to fill a gaping void in the range of Christian literature in South Africa. I believe that God chose him for this task, and has prepared him over the years to convey such a picture of Soweto. In addition, of course, he has done extensive research and has spoken to many people.

The author deals with many aspects of Soweto, but always finds one lasting solution: JESUS CHRIST.

Is there in South Africa the spiritual wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the forces of darkness which so threaten Soweto - and through Soweto our continent?

It is an honour for the Dorothea Mission to publish and to distribute this book. I commend it to all and pray He may use it for a decisive victory of the Gospel in Soweto. Upon such an outcome more depends than the human mind can contemplate. The alternative is unthinkable. I believe that everybody will agree with this after having read the book, "Soweto ... but God!"

E.P.H. von Staden,
Director, Dorothea Mission.
Pretoria, New Year, 1978.

Chapter One

What is Soweto?

Think of a city...

a city without skyscrapers. . .
without airport or harbour. . .
without industries or shopping complexes. . .
with few of the amenities that other cities
take for granted. . .

a most unusual city, an unofficial city, the fifth largest in Africa today. A city with about 800 000 'official' residents, but with enough 'unofficial' inhabitants to bring the total population up to about 1,5 million men, women and children.

Think of a city...

a city called Soweto...

a bustling, tempestuous community some 20 kilometers to the south west of the Golden Metropolis of Johannesburg. A cluster of mushrooming townships that have grown up unknown and unnoticed under the shadow of the strange 'trees' of the concrete jungle. Thousands of little matchbox houses baking in neat rows under the hot African sun in summer, or huddling together beneath a blanket of smog when the cold winter mornings keep the smoke of countless coal stoves close to the ground.

Think of a city...

a city unknown and unloved until a day of violence and bloodshed hurled the name 'Soweto' into the headlines of newspapers around the world. . .

Think of a city...

a city...?

But how will you picture it? How will you describe it. One writer tried to describe "Sunny, sullen, smiling, scowling, solemn, swinging... Soweto the vital, the vibrant, the violent... Someday Soweto the Black city... Proud, humble, poor, rich (occasionally), patient, vigorous, soccer-mad, singing, laughing, shouting, church-going..."

There are many ways to describe this city and in the final analysis, the answer you give to the question “*What is Soweto?*” will depend upon the way that you look at it.

If you have a factory needing many workers, then Soweto is your never-failing source of izisebenzi. If you are an anthropologist, then this place will provide fascinating studies of simple, tribal peoples being ‘pressure-cooked’ into sophisticated cosmopolites... If you are a sociologist, you will see the place as a cauldron of unresolved problems brought about by overcrowding and poor living conditions.



The long road from
the kraal to the city.

If you are a criminologist or a policeman you will see the enormous questions of crime control. If you are a politician you will see it as a headache and a possible threat. But to get the full picture, you need a higher point of view, the Christian point of view.

To you and I as Christians, children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, Soweto is - must be - something far greater; we must learn to see the urban blacks of South Africa as a challenge and a responsibility.

We must learn to see Soweto and its peoples through the eyes of Jesus Christ, to feel the love and compassion with which God once tried to correct the faulty vision of Jonah, the angry prophet who so much wanted to see an end to the wicked city of Nineveh. Do you remember what God said?

“... and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?” Jonah 4:11 AV

Like any of us, Soweto is no more than the product of its heredity and its history. To understand what Soweto is today we must glance briefly at where it came from and how it grew.

The two sister cities, Soweto and Johannesburg grew from the same seed - Gold. In the year 1884 a prospector pronounced the magic word, and in the twinkling of an eye tents and buildings appeared on the barren veld as men from every nation under the sun joined the rush to search for gold on the stony slopes of the Witwatersrand. The Australians, the Americans, the English, the Germans, the Poles and the Danes together with a motley assortment of other nations joined the scramble. They brought their picks and their shovels and their primitive explosives and their strange machines. They looked about for willing workers to help them in their frantic search for the yellow metal.

And so the men of Africa came.

Their skins burned brown by the hot sun. Their bodies strong and healthy from their simple way of life in the kraals and villages that dotted the landscape. The proud warriors from a hundred different tribes laid aside their shields and assegais and took up the white man's tools to dig and delve in the trenches which began to scar the once-serene veld.

The Zulus, the Xhosas, the Tswanas, the Pedis, the Swazis and the Shangaans came to sell their toil so that they may buy the glittering baubles that the white men had brought.



To dig and to delve in the trenches which began to scar the once-serene veld.

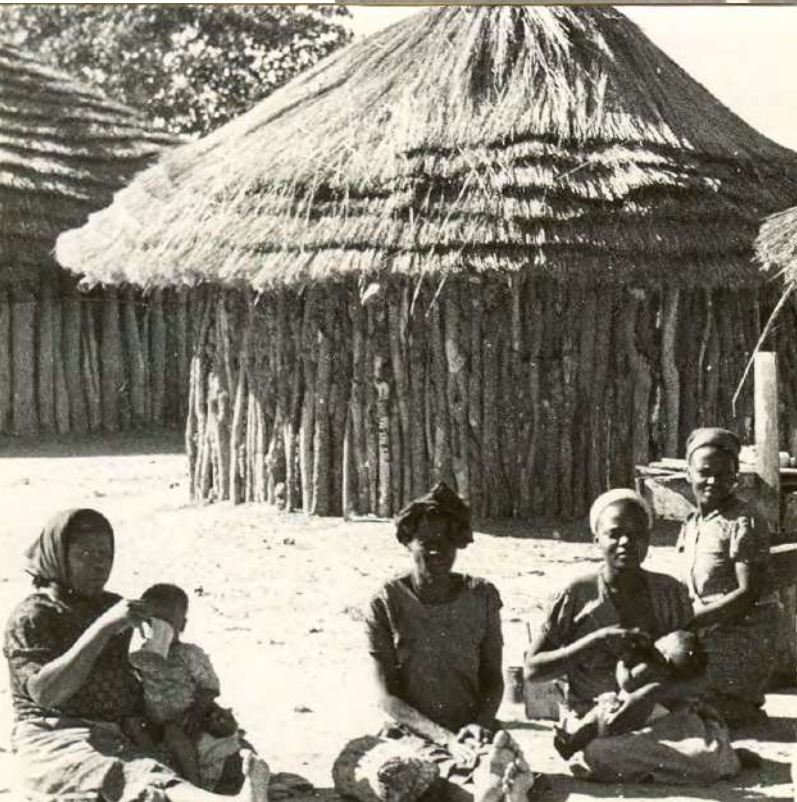
Not many of these proud, dark-skinned men remembered nor cared about the words of the great Xhosa prophet, Ntsikana, who had predicted the coming of the white man so many years before.

He had spoken of fair-skinned strangers who would come to the sunny shores of South Africa carrying a black book in one hand and shiny round things in the other. He had warned his people to take the black book but to have nothing to do with the round yellow things, for they would bring much sorrow to the people.

But the men from over the great waters promised food and drink and luxuries undreamed of - a whole new way of living to those who would come and work for them.

And so they came to eGoli, the place where men sought for the gold. By day they laboured alongside the white men, and at night they lived in their idlangala, the temporary shelters that they had put up alongside the tents and houses of the white fortune-hunters in the frantic confusion that was Ferriera's mining camp in the 80's.





And then the surface deposits petered out.

The metal was still there, but it lay deep below the surface. New mining companies were formed. Expensive and complicated machines began to arrive, and many more workers recruited to run the mines. Hostels or compounds were put up for these migrant male mineworkers.

Johannesburg was growing fast, commerce and trade were flourishing. A host of small industries developed to service the big machines and to provide equipment for the mines. A galaxy of small factories to provide food and clothing and furniture and all the other things that were too costly to import for the rapidly expanding population of Joh'burg. More workers were needed, and on a more permanent basis than for the mines.

And so the families began to arrive from the kraals and villages. Donkey-carts or ox-wagons or even wheelbarrows piled high with dogs and chickens and cooking pots and stools and what have you.

They brought their shy, giggling wives and their fat, bouncing piccanins and their gangling teenagers. They brought everything that they thought they would need in this new life in the big city. They even brought the witchdoctor, their isanusi with his charms and spells to protect them from the unknown dangers of this strange world of buildings and machines.

They left the ways of the tribe - or at least some of the most important ones - behind them forever.

The carefree people who had previously known only the quiet and simple life of the country, whose lives had been guided and guarded by the stern imithetho nemikhuba yesizwe, the ancient laws and customs of the tribe suddenly found themselves hurled into all of the confusion and insecurity of life in squatters' camps.

The boom town welcomed them as workers in the day, but cared not a fig for them outside of working hours. Nothing had been done to prepare for their arrival, for they were regarded only as 'temporary residents'.

But they made do somehow.

They begged, borrowed and if need be stole enough bits of wood, tin, cardboard and sacking to make some kind of shelter, and crowded together in the crude camps that were eventually to evolve into the complex of Soweto as we know it today.

They huddled together in sad collections of poverty. We cannot truly say 'and misery', for the Africans are a happy-go-lucky people and can sing and laugh under the most difficult circumstances - but life was certainly not easy.

Crime and immorality were rife. Sin and shame reigned unchecked in the insecurity of a people who had been torn loose from their tribal moorings and were now helplessly adrift on a sea of social change, riptides which swept many, many lives away into a lost eternity.

There was the most heartbreaking degree of spiritual need in these squatters' camps, but no-one thought to do anything about it...



Relatively different
levels of development.

The people of Johannesburg were too taken up with their search for gold and pleasure to concern themselves with their own spiritual welfare let alone that of their servants.

There were one or two missionary-minded folk who did try to do something, but they could not even scratch the surface.

The sternly religious burghers of the Transvaal Republic regarded Johannesburg as an abomination, a veritable 'Sodom and Gomorrah', and had as little traffic as possible with the ungodly activities of these uitlanders whose frantic search for gold had so disrupted their placid pastoral life.

Out on the farms, the God-fearing men whose fathers had trekked into the interior with gun in hand and Bible in the 'wakis' used to hold services for their servants every Sunday, and also insisted that their household servants share in the family devotions at the close of the day Missionaries had come to the villages and kraals in many parts of Southern Africa to tell of the love of God and to win black souls to the Kingdom of God.

But in Gauteng, the place of the gold, very few cared about the things of God, and even fewer took time to talk to their black workers about their souls. The result was that practically none of the natives who were flocking to the city had any kind of moral or spiritual defence against the temptations and pressures that they were exposed to in their new environment. The golden city continued to develop rapidly. New suburbs sprang up in all directions.

Horse-drawn trams appeared in the streets, the fashionable areas of Hospital Hill and Parktown were illuminated with the wonderful new electric light. Magnificent buildings went up, and the population grew by leaps and bounds... But the stern men of the mining village.

A completely inadequate Sanitary Committee tried valiantly to cope with the administration of the lusty young city, but inevitably this hard-pressed committee gave its main concern to the needs of the white city and had little time to spare for the miserable slum townships of the blacks. By 1896 there were 102 000 people living in Johannesburg, only half of them whites.

The report of the Johannesburg Insanitary Area Improvement Scheme Commission, published in 1903, gives a vivid picture of the conditions which prevailed in the area now called Newtown. The city gasworks were at the corner of West and President Streets, and to the north were old brickfields

on which a veritable shantytown had been built. Part of this area was called Coolie Town, and in this complex of filth and squalor lived 5 000 people of all races. The streets were twisted and narrow, the water was drawn from polluted wells, and lavatories were just holes dug in the ground.



Moroka, AD 1945.

As a result of the Commission's recommendations, the area was expropriated so that it could be re-planned. Streets such as Jeppe and Bree were to become through streets, and provision would be made for a market site.

But there was no place for the wretched inhabitants to move to. Then, as now, whites resisted all proposals to move the natives into any area near their homes. In the face of these objections the scheme had to be shelved.

Until 1904 when something happened which made the protests irrelevant. Bubonic plague broke out in the townships.

The officials of the newly-appointed Town Council acted that very night. All of the inhabitants were cleared out and their hovels burned to the ground.

Space was made for blacks and Indians, "*temporarily*" at Klipspruit, twelve miles south west of the city centre. There they rebuilt with whatever they could rescue from the ashes and with what they could scrounge.

And Soweto was born.

The development of the Witwatersrand continued. By now a long, straggling line of towns had sprung up along the reef, stretching from Nigel in the East to Krugersdorp in the west, each with their own location for black workers and servants.

However, all roads led to Joh'burg, where every mining house had its head office and the bright lights shone out every night of the week, but this progress and development hardly touched the eyesore townships which huddled in the shadows of the growing city... it only brought more and more people to the overcrowded slums.

It took another disaster to focus attention onto the townships and their appalling need. In 1918 the great 'flu epidemic struck South Africa. Thousands of people, both black and white died, but the toll was much higher in the noisome locations.

At last the heart of Johannesburg was touched.

In response to rather belated public indignation, an Advisory Board was set up to represent the urban blacks, and a new residential area, Western Native Township was proclaimed with much fanfare. Between 1918 and 1921 the Johannesburg municipality built 220 houses there... But tens of thousands of

others were still living in appalling conditions in 'uncontrolled areas' such as Newclare, Sophiatown, Prospect Township and the like. The Medical Officer of Health was instructed to condemn these slum areas, but his report for 1923 states, *"... there have long been a large number of premises scheduled as unfit for human habitation, but the crowded population of these places consisted almost exclusively of Natives and Coloured persons for whom no accommodation elsewhere was available, and therefore the MOH was not prepared to certify them for closure unless definitely instructed to do so by the Committee."*



Newclare. AD 1945.



In that same year an act was passed in Parliament which placed the responsibility for providing housing for those Natives living and employed in urban areas upon the shoulders of local municipalities, but it took some time to take effect. Until 1927 the administration of Native Affairs

in Johannesburg was the responsibility of the Parks and Estates Committee. The priorities of this Committee can be gauged from the fact that the nett expenditure for 1927 for upkeep of the zoo, the parks and the cemeteries was R249 960, and that which was spent on the locations was only R33 620.

In 1928 a Standing Committee for Native Affairs was created and large extensions to the Native townships, both Eastern and Western Native Townships, were begun. By 1930 a total of 2 625 houses had been erected. The Council also bought a 1 300 morgen piece of a farm at Klipspruit. A competition was held for the laying out of a township, Orlando, which was to house some 80 000 people.

Slowly the houses went up, but it was an enormous task to make up the backlog. Let alone provide enough houses for the continual stream of newcomers who continued to drift in from the country, drawn to the bright city lights by the need for money and food, or by the same dreams that people (especially young people) the world over seem to share about the big city.

But inevitably they found the same disillusionment that has come to countless others... The dreams of quick wealth and pleasure had to give way to the harsh realities of low wages and high living costs.

If you could even get a job, for the 30's were the years of the depression and work was scarce.

The dreams of ease and comfort were quickly shattered by the awful overcrowding in the townships, with too many families trying to crowd into too few tiny hovels.

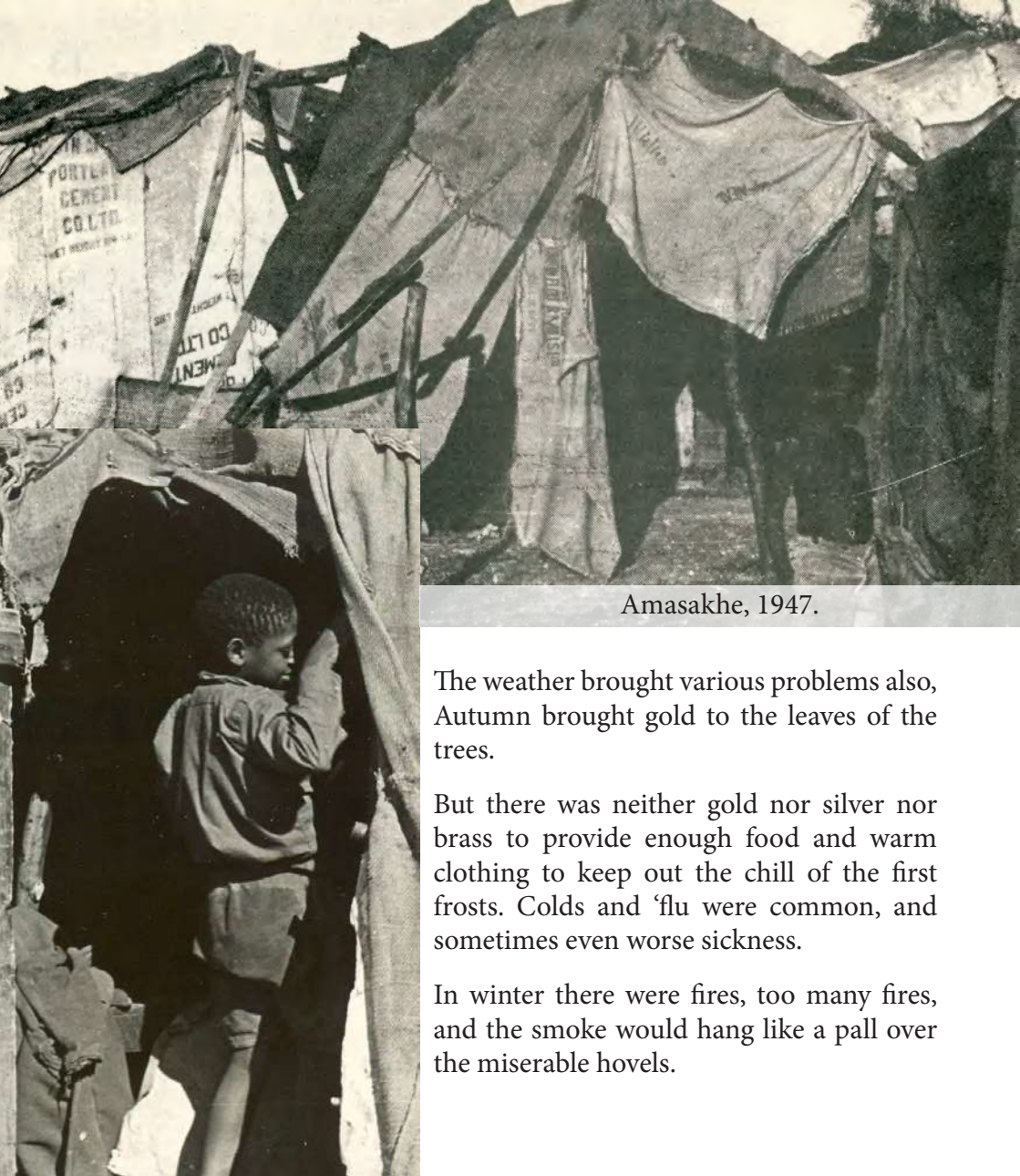
Think of the city as it was then.

Try to picture the hopeless confusion of the countless one-room shanties propping each other up.

Incredible patchwork creations of ingenuity, desperation and optimism; walls made of flattened paraffin tins or scraps of corrugated iron and wood and cardboard and sacking scrounged from anywhere and everywhere.

roofs more hopeful than waterproof, made of rusty sheets of corrugated iron held down with stones and discarded motor car tyres. In the narrow, crazy alleyways children and dogs and chickens played or romped or scratched in happy confusion during the day while their mothers gossiped or quarrelled as they did their chores or carried water from the long queue at the nearest community tap.

In Sophiatown, for example, there were only 27 taps and people bought water by the bucketful at stated times. At night these alleys were haunts of terror where gansters lay in wait to rob or to rape or to kill. All of the evils and terrors of the wretched life of the slums reigned in the townships. Immorality and crime and violence were commonplace, for the conditions in these 'black spots' seemed to bring out the very worst in some of the inhabitants.



Amasakhe, 1947.

The weather brought various problems also, Autumn brought gold to the leaves of the trees.

But there was neither gold nor silver nor brass to provide enough food and warm clothing to keep out the chill of the first frosts. Colds and 'flu were common, and sometimes even worse sickness.

In winter there were fires, too many fires, and the smoke would hang like a pall over the miserable hovels.

Every family had their mbawula or brazier which would be placed in the centre of the room at night. But a smoking brazier in a one-room shanty which has been draft-proofed as much as possible with bits of newspaper can be deadly, too many families died of carbon monoxide gassing.

Spring and summer brought green to the veld and to the trees (there were few gardens), but it also brought the rain...

Places like Prospect Township and Sophiatown were certainly not well planned, those who lived in the hollows would sometimes waken with the wet reminder that they were the drainage point for the neighbourhood.

Slowly, too slowly, the work of building went on. By 1935 there were 3 000 houses in Orlando; by 1938 Pimville had been added and there were 5 800 houses.

But black clouds were gathering in Europe.

Apart from all of the destruction that Hitler's armies brought to the northern hemisphere, they also put a stop to the much-needed building programme in the townships of South Africa, as all manpower had to be geared to the war effort. The war years changed almost every aspect of Bantu life in Johannesburg.

The war brought about a tremendous increase in the number of factories and industries, those directly connected with the war effort and those which arose to produce things which could not be imported. The result was an insatiable demand for black workers.

The trickle of blacks coming to Johannesburg rose to a flood. By 1946 it was estimated that there were 211 322 men, 100 000 women and 83 909 children in the Native Townships.

Dozens of new shanty villages sprang up like deformed mushrooms on the bare koppies around the existing locations; Lapho kuhlala abantu abaningi ngempela khona - places where too many people live together.

The end of the war added chaos to confusion as hundreds of black soldiers came home from the wars to find no room to live in the teeming slums and no work in the postwar recession.

An emergency housing project was launched in Moroka, and hundreds of 'temporary' breeze-block shelters were put up.



Then a man came to the fore, James 'Sofasonke' Mpanza; under his leadership the returned soldiers put up neat shacks of sacking and canvas in an area near to Orlando. At first this 'tent township' was called "*Tobruk*", but inevitably it became "*Amasakhe*", the sack village where the summer rains dripped through the worn canvas roofs and the bitter wind cut like knives through the thin walls in winter.



But the highveld of the Transvaal is subject to strange weather. One day in early 1947, after a period of particularly hot weather, the sky grew dark, with strange copper-coloured clouds. Suddenly a terrible black snake seemed to strike from the sky, and a tornado ripped through the flimsy sack houses leaving thousands homeless.

The situation was now critical, so the authorities decided to clear several of the camps and move the inhabitants to Moroka. Unfortunately, there were strong vested interests which tried to prevent this. In some of the "*black spots*" there were blacks who had somehow been able to get freehold rights to pieces of land.

They became the worst rack-renters imaginable. They would wire up the water taps so that tenants would have to go to the free taps some distance away and carry their water home in buckets. They would nail up the lavatory doors to save paying for the thrice-weekly collection of the pails... And charged the most exorbitant rentals for the most miserable, poky little hovels. When they heard that these camps were to be cleared, they did all in their power to prevent the move. There were legal actions, bribery, and finally, they did their best to stir up the people.

The fact that when the move began it was quickly found that the facilities at Moroka were inadequate merely added fuel to the fire. There were angry shouts. Stones were thrown and when the dust settled after the rioting, three white policemen lay dead. But the problem was still there.

Strangely enough, there were no laws to prevent the kind of situation which had given rise to the riots until the Illegal Squatters' Act was passed in 1951.





However, there were more and more people who were becoming aware of the situation. In 1947 a Mr. Justice Broome was appointed to look into conditions among the native population of the locations in and around Durban. The March 20th issue of *The Forum* (1948) had this to say about the report:

Defective housing is the root of more evils than can be enumerated. South Africa's urban Native population is not only defectively housed: a goodly proportion of it is not housed at all. Like the birds and the beasts, it finds such shelter as nature and its own ingenuity make possible. No wonder disease is rife, crime flourishes, immorality increases and misery and frustration multiply. Unless and until the 2 000 000 Native men and women and children who live in our towns and cities are decently housed, they will continue to constitute a problem of staggering dimensions.

These ideas are implicit in a significant document issued last week - the report of Mr. Justice Broome based on his inquiry into the welfare of Durban's Native population. *"The indiscriminate herding together of males and females in shacks and the segregation of males in barracks apart from their families both lead to sexual promiscuity and the spread of venereal disease."* Malnutrition and venereal disease are responsible for the fact that 70% of Durban's Native children are in need of care, and that Durban's infant mortality is pretty near the highest in the world.

No wonder Mr. Justice Broome calls these *"shameful facts"* - and they are by no means peculiar to Durban. The real tragedy about South Africa is that these and other shameful facts are known to all who care to know: and yet, in contrast with the needs, so little is done. The reason, of course, is public apathy, which is well-nigh indistinguishable from in-humanity. South Africa has no right to call itself civilised as long as it tolerates such conditions, as long as its social conscience is conspicuous by its absence.

But the social conscience of the country, and especially of the Golden City had been stirred.

And every effort was being made to improve conditions and to get rid of the 'black spots' as quickly as possible.

In 1950 it was estimated that the housing backlog in the townships in and around Johannesburg was still over 50 000 dwelling units. The Native Affairs' Department of the city council borrowed as much money as they could, and even went into debt to put up 8 000 houses at Orlando and Jabavu. Black

artisans were trained in the building trade. The National Building Research Institute spent a great deal of time on finding ways and means of building cheap but sturdy and comfortable houses. In the end they came up with plans and specifications for houses costing about R600.

But it was still slow going.

To overcome the problem of overcrowding and all the attendant evils while the houses were being built, a venture called "*Site and Service Scheme*" was begun. Building sites of 40 x 70 feet were laid out and allocated to families waiting for houses.

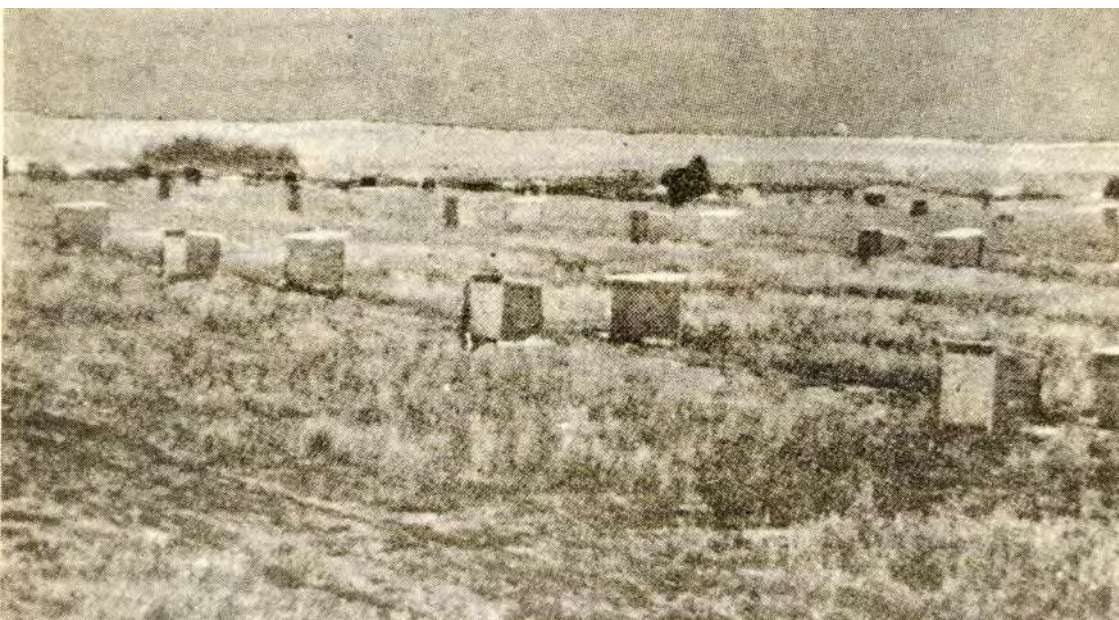
Essential services were provided, access roads built and refuse removal services provided.



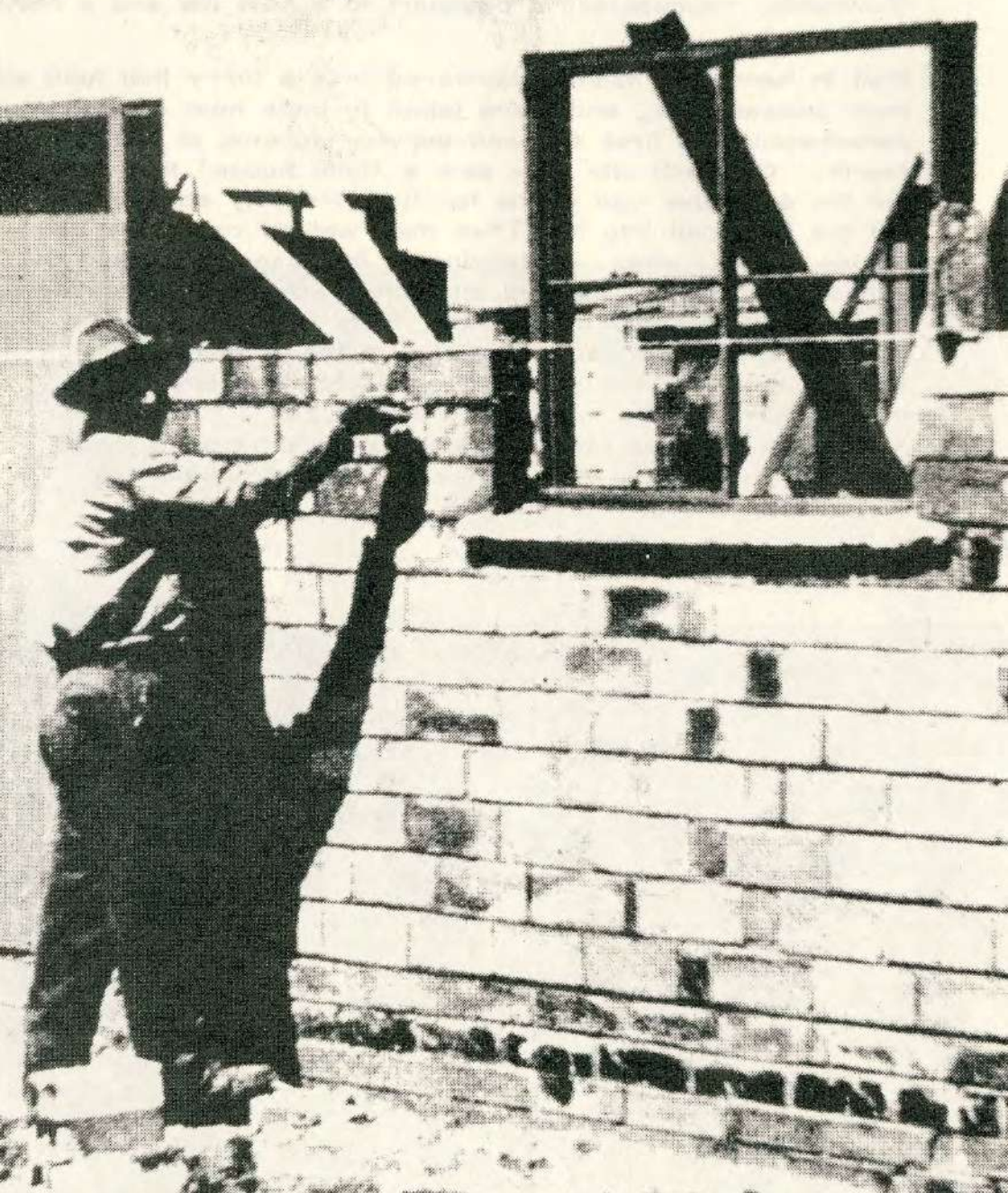
Tenants were allowed to put up a temporary house at the back of the site. The permanent houses would be erected at the front, and then the shack would be pulled down. At first the scheme met with scepticism and opposition, but it was soon seen that this was a realistic effort to cope with the large number of squatters who could not be given homes at once, the only way of dealing with the housing shortage.

Dissent soon turned to praise; the following report appeared in *The Star* of July 18th 1955: *"To possess your own lavatory pail might not seem to be the ultimate in human ambition. Nevertheless, on yesterday's smiling, sunny Sunday, a pail and a dustbin presented to each of 12 Bantu families by the Superintendent of Jabavu Township, represented a passport to a new life and a new hope."*

Pail in hand, the Bantu clambered onto a lorry that held all their possessions, and were taken to their new stands on Johannesburg's first site-and-service scheme at Moroka North. On each site they saw a 'little house' that was for the exclusive use of the family. Proudly each family put the new pail into it. Then they walked round the boundaries of their sites, exclaiming at the size. The 40ft by 70ft stands seemed so vast after the pocket handkerchiefs of land, 20ft by 20ft or smaller, from which they had come. These pioneers on s-&-s in the Johannesburg area came from a miserable, unserviced squatter camp in the Moroka area known as 'New Look'. There nearly 200 families had been paying 23 shillings a month for the privilege of living on a bit of land without tap water and without a latrine."



New homes in Orlando, 1950.



The biggest hindrance to the building programme has always been the shortage of capital; it was thus a tremendous boost to the creation of Soweto when Sir Ernest Oppenheimer arranged a loan of six million Rand for township development in 1956. It meant that at last a realistic approach could be made to planning, marking out and building a city, albeit piece by piece. It meant that new townships could be surveyed and pegged out, water and sanitation and all the other essential services could be planned and construction begun.

Over the years since then, the pace of building has waxed and waned according to the amount of money on hand for building. In the hey-day of building, it was claimed that no fewer than 63 houses were being completed per day.

But it was not only houses which had to be built; the rapidly developing community needed hostels and schools and clinics and offices and halls and churches and shops and dozens of other buildings as well. Roads had to be constructed and all kinds of essential services laid on, and it all had to be done from very limited funds.

Government policy has been to limit the growth of such urban black communities in close proximity to white urban centres, encouraging people rather to develop the ethnic homelands. Until very recently trading was restricted and permission was never given for the erection of shopping centres or complexes such as have become common in white areas, nor have industries developed. Blacks were not allowed to own land and property in the townships; until very recently they could not get more than a thirty year lease on their homes.

All of this has, naturally, restricted the development of a place like Soweto, and has compounded the difficulty of raising the necessary capital for development by severely limiting the sources of revenue from the complex. Rentals from the council-built houses have remained very low, and there were no rates and taxes levied, and most towns and cities pay for development and services from these.

The result has been that the white taxpayer has financed the bulk of black urban development in South Africa until now. But with the rapid increase in the incomes of black workers over recent years this has become unnecessary - recent legislation is taking this into account, and more and more of the cost of upkeep and development of Soweto will be carried by the inhabitants of the city.

Soweto 1978 - A fine city.

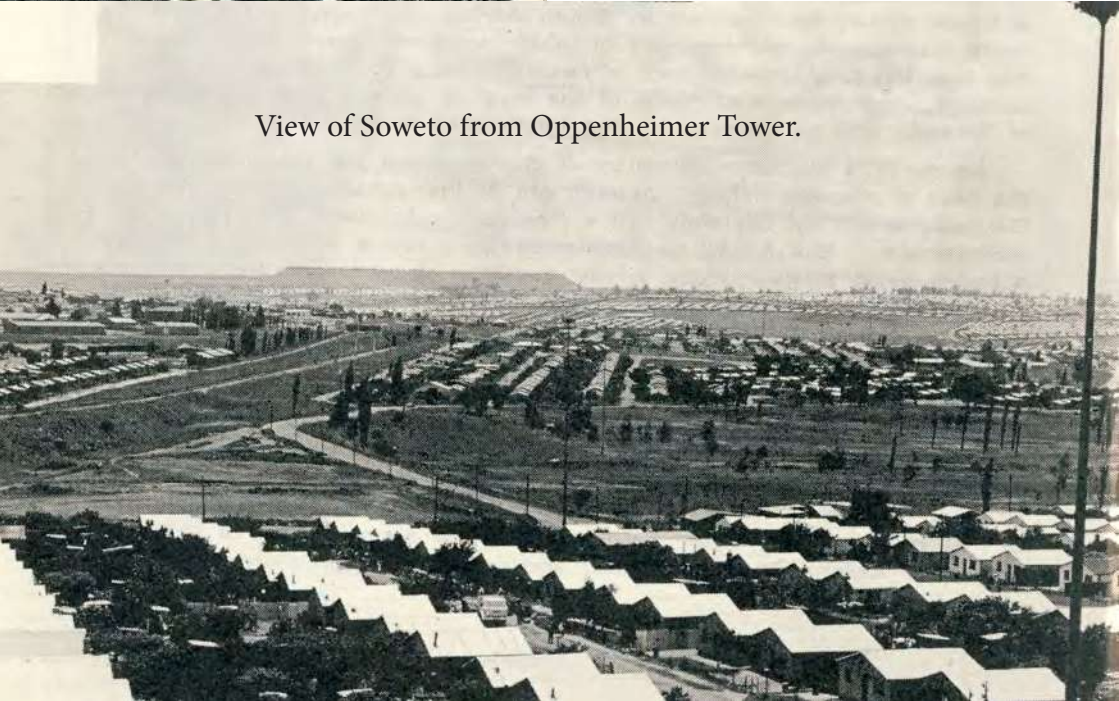
New homes going
up in Pimville, all
with electricity.



Up to 1973 the administration of Soweto was the responsibility of the Non European Affairs Department of the Johannesburg City Council, and they certainly did a fine job under very difficult circumstances. But it had become necessary for a new approach, on a nation-wide basis, to the whole question of administering both urban and rural black peoples. At that stage there was a tremendous disparity in the management of the different areas, and this inevitably gave rise to dissatisfaction.

In 1973 the government set up a series of regional boards to administer all matters relating to the welfare of the black peoples in the urban areas of the Republic. In June of that year the running and oversight of Soweto was taken over by the West Rand

View of Soweto from Oppenheimer Tower.



Administration Board (WRAB). This body inherited all of the problems of that city, and inevitably have had to face a great deal of criticism (much of which has been biased and unfounded) for their efforts.

But it must be remembered that they did not father this boisterous and rather unruly child, nor did they have anything to do with his upbringing - they just have to try to make him into a respectable, law-abiding citizen. No mean task, to be sure.'

And, to be sure, Soweto is a fine city today, in spite of the limitations. For one thing, there are no more shanties to be seen - the last ones in Pimville were pulled down in March 1974. There is still a certain amount of overcrowding, and there are 9 500 people on the waiting list for houses (as always, the lack of money is holding up the programme, but a new and imaginative 'revolving fund' has been created, and it is hoped to have about R2 million by the beginning of 1978); nearly 13 000 people live in their own homes, houses that would be a credit to any suburb in any city in the country.

"Most of those houses are the old sub economic 51/6 style, their owners have added kitchens and bathrooms and toilets and extra bedrooms as well as carports or garages. You would be amazed to see the furnishings inside those houses. We are now building only 51/9 houses for tenants, these have separate bathroom and kitchen. For people who want to build themselves, we have a range of plans, or they have their own plans drawn and they then submit them in the usual way. Some of the new houses in Dube would not be out of place in the best suburbs in Johannesburg or Pretoria."

The shadowy, dangerous streets which have always been the haunt of criminals at night are being transformed by the erection of high-powered 'high mast lights' at every intersection. When these are complete, by about 1980, they will totally eliminate the shadows. Together with this will go the electrification of Soweto, to supply current to every home.

"The only drawback at the moment is the money. A consortium of banks looked into it and their experts said that it would cost about R59 million. But we checked this, and a team of consultants told us that it could not be done for under R90 million, which seems more realistic to us. The banks offered us the money at 'ruling rates of interest' which would have been about 13%, it had to be a state-guaranteed loan repayable over five years. This seemed exorbitant to us, especially for such safe terms. It would have meant that we would have had to charge the black people a

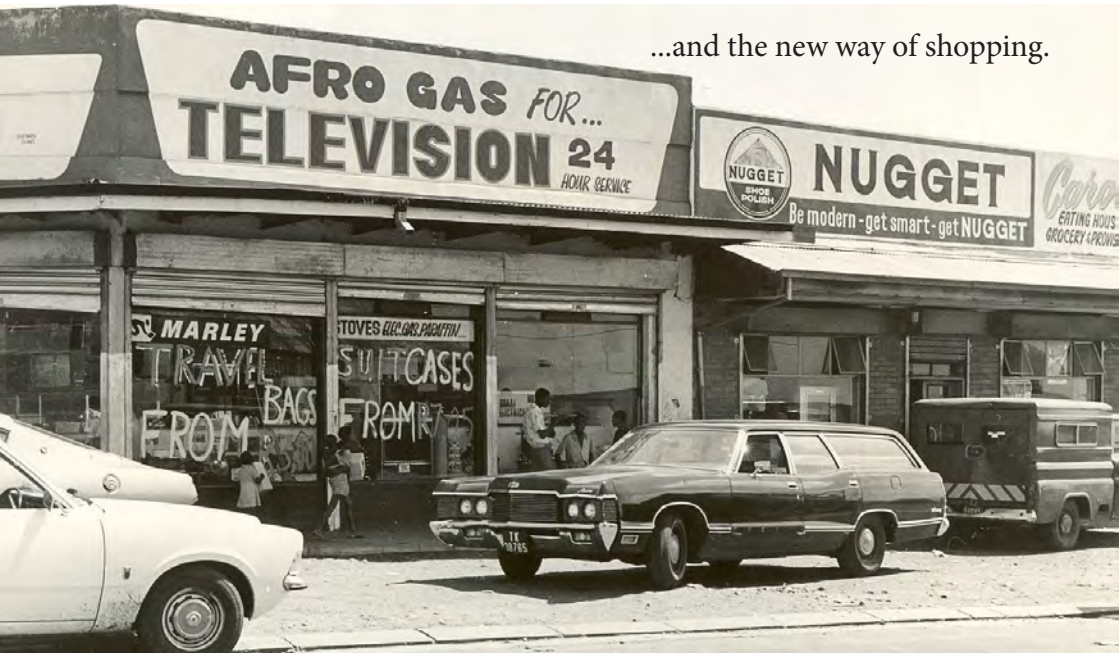
The old way of shopping...



very high rental, which together with the cost of electric appliances, would have virtually crippled most of them financially. We are looking into the possibility of doing the job piecemeal, and have already had much better offers of money."

Which will enable the Sowetans to plug in before long and to enjoy all of the benefits of electricity - something still unknown in many towns in the Republic.

...and the new way of shopping.



Even shopping is changing rapidly in Soweto. In the early days retailers were severely limited and were only allowed to stock the most basic items, bread, milk, sugar etc. Slowly this has been broadened, to allow traders to carry a wider and more balanced stock and there are some very wealthy businessmen in Soweto today, even a couple of millionaires.

A new era is being ushered in today with the WRAB giving serious consideration to the building of a major shopping complex in Soweto, and doing away with the old 'one man one business' idea which limited businessmen to being allowed to operate only one kind of business.

These home-owners and businessmen are solid citizens, and they naturally want to have their share in the day-to-day administration of their city. They are active in the multitude of committees which always seem to spring up in any community, and many of them are members of the Urban Bantu Councils. These are elected representatives of the citizens who are consulted in all matters affecting the welfare and administration of the area in which they live. Unfortunately these Councils did not turn out as the state had intended.

"The fault did not lie in the intention or the legislation, but in the local civic authorities who were to administer and regulate and work with these councils. In some areas these councils were given certain executive powers and did a good job, but in others, such as Soweto, they were no more than advisors to the Non European Affairs Department Officials, and hence they were given the nickname of 'Useless Boy's Club'.

For example, we found that in Alexandra there was no UBC or any representation at all, nor in Diepkloof or Meadowlands. Dobsonville, with only 4500 houses had a strong council with considerable executive power. Also places like Kagiso, Mohlakeng and Bekkersdal also had good councils with a fair amount of executive power.

This caused a good deal of discontent in Soweto."

After the riots, 13 of the 41-member Soweto UBC resigned, but the remaining 28 members still meet regularly with officials of the WRAB and with their people, and there are regular consultations with leading citizens in Meadowlands and Diepkloof and Dobsonville. Mr. H.P.P. Mulder, the Chairman of WRAB has made a practice of arranging direct discussions with cabinet ministers or secretaries of government departments wherever possible to deal with specific issues; in this way he has been able to overcome a great deal of the previous tensions and misunderstandings.



The next stage of the political development of the urban blacks is to be the election of Community Councils. These are intended to be as democratic as possible; all registered citizens of Soweto will be able to vote for the 31-member council which will be elected in February of 1978. These councils have been given wide-ranging executive powers by the Act, but will decide for themselves how quickly they will take over the effective administration of the city.

Here is the city, the busy, bustling, turbulent city of Soweto, the city that grew, painfully but rapidly out of a squalor of shanty towns, the city that is so different from any other in the world. A complex kaleidoscope of social and cultural contrasts; barefoot women with blanket-swathed babies on their backs, or breast-feeding them in a quiet corner, rub shoulders with sophisticated wives of businessmen. Suave ladies dressed in the latest creations from Europe and America, unskilled, semi-literate manual labourers, adorned with colourful blankets and heavy earrings walk the same pavements as professional men discussing a recent business trip abroad.

Some of them are temporary sojourners, their 'real' homes are in KwaZulu or Transkei or BophutaTswana and they will go to live there when they have made their 'pile'. Some are busy with alterations and improvements to their homes in Dube or Meadowlands or Mapetla.

The majority are reasonably content with their lot, and want no more than the opportunity to work and to educate their children and to enjoy life.

Some, a very small proportion are frustrated and dissatisfied with life. The radicals, political agitators. And the tsotsis - the criminal element.

There have always been those whose 'thing' is politics unfortunately in Soweto, as in the world at large today, there is the unhappy polarisation and tension between the moderates, those who realise that changes are necessary but who are willing to work peacefully with the authorities to bring about changes, and the hard-line radicals whose slogan is "*everything, yesterday!*" and are determined to force changes in any way and at any cost.

Many of these are starry-eyed idealists who have been taken in by the blandishments of Marxist philosophy. They have come to believe implicitly that 'power grows from the barrel of a gun', and are not willing to negotiate or discuss their demands.

They do not know that there is another way to turn the world upside down.



And the result is that they make life difficult and even painful for other people. One of the greatest tragedies about the so-called “*struggle for liberation*” in Southern Africa as we have seen it in Mozambique and Angola and now in Rhodesia and South West Africa, is that it is the very people who are supposed to be being liberated who are suffering the most in the process and the result.

Of course, we must not overlook the fact that the people of Soweto are not strangers to danger and violence; the main difference is that up to now the trouble came from those who wanted to rob them, now it is from those who want to liberate them.

To most Sowetans, crime and violence are part and parcel of their lives, it has been with them all through their turbulent history...

“The police try to catch them and to stop the bad things, but it is too much, there are too many tsotsis and they are too clever.”

Way back in 1947 the Rand Daily Mail published an article, ***“Why Crime Marches On”*** (May 7th) in which they said,

“The criminal ranks are recruiting faster and more heavily than the police, and crime marches on. The important necessity is to remove those incentives to crime which South Africa has allowed to grow, not merely since the war but for many years.

Thousands of Natives have flocked from the kraals where they were under tribal discipline and a code which they could understand and with no encouragement - indeed with no vestige of a chance - to settle down and become respectable citizens. It is idle to talk now of sending them all back home, even if it were desirable. It is equally futile to talk of curing them with the whip.

Our neglect has bred ignorance, idleness and a feeling of resentment and frustration that finds an outlet in crime, and only when we have provided all the natives in our cities with a reasonable alternative to crime can we expect them to show any regard for the law.”

Slum conditions the world over have always somehow, been schools for crime. Poverty and squalor seem to provide ideal breeding grounds for vice and violence. Sociologists would tell us that the awful shanty towns which have evolved into the Soweto of today were particularly bad.

There were too many men without their families. Too much Poverty and; Privation. Too many new situations and temptations. These simple tribesmen quickly learned the advantages of having money.

And too many of them found that it was so much easier to steal it than to work for it.

But even worse than that.

In the chaotic conditions of the township immorality was rife. It was too easy to form casual relationships which resulted in unwanted children. Back in the kraals and villages it had always been tolerated that a woman should prove her child- bearing capability before the marriage.

But that had been under strict regulations, and the man could never evade his responsibility. In the townships, the predatory male simply disappeared, leaving the mother to fend for herself and the baby. This kind of thing was particularly bad in the awful period after the war.

But it is still just as bad as ever in the much improved conditions of today. . .

I asked the chief housing officer of the WRAB what his worst problem is at the moment, and he replied very simply,

"Overcrowding in many houses..."

No, it is not often brought about by illegal tenants, it is all too often the result of the indiscriminate promiscuity of the daughters.

For example, my own servant at home lives in Soweto. She has four daughters, each of whom have produced three children - each by a different man.



The result is that there are at least seventeen people living in a rather small house... The law states that only married men can qualify for houses, so, until those girls marry they will have to stay with their parents.

Now if you multiply that sort of thing by a few thousand."

You have a situation in which thousands of children are living with aged relatives in the townships while mother tries to earn a living in the city, crowds of ragged urchins running wild, playing innocently enough at first, but, like children the world over, where there is not enough supervision, they quickly get into mischief.

Some of them get over this stage and go on to school, but many do not. Since schooling is not compulsory, too many never get that far. And so their mischief-making becomes more serious. They experiment with smoking then dagga, then drinking.

They need money, so they try picking pockets, shoplifting and bag-snatching. Finally, burglary, armed robbery and murder.

During the wild and chaotic forties they got their name from the tight trousers that they all wore... Tsotsis.

Hoodlums, gangsters, any name fits these wild and lawless youngsters. Kids who have grown up with little or no education. Bitter and twisted youths. Keenly aware of their rejection by their fathers and by all 'normal' society. Convinced that the world - especially the white world - owes them a living. To these youngsters, work is *ihlazo*, a shameful thing and a prison record *udumo*, an honour.

They are the undisputed rulers of the dark alleys at night and are responsible for over 60% of Soweto's enormous crime rate.

Like vultures they prey on their own people. They ride the overcrowded trains on paydays, picking pockets or demanding the paypacket.

Few have the courage to refuse, for they carry knives and sharpened bicycle spokes, they can kill in silence or cripple their victim by severing the spinal cord. People do not go out alone at night in the townships unless it is utterly essential, for they take their lives in their hands if they do.

The word 'tsotsi' (or *tsotsikazi* for the girls) is often used in a fairly loose and colloquial way of youths representing widely differing degrees of lawlessness. There is no doubt that there are 'part-time' tsotsis, working young men and women as well as older schoolchildren who like to hang around with the 'real' tsotsis.

And in this regard it is important to note that out of 361 schools in Soweto, only 40 took part directly in the riots and the subsequent disturbances. These were the Junior Secondary Schools. They cater only for standards 6, 7 and 8. The average age of the pupils at these schools ranges from 18 to 25 years of age.

Many of them therefore were scholars who found it difficult to learn and had a chip on their shoulders.

Here then is the city. A city with all of the basic amenities necessary for a reasonable level of community living.

Over a million people living together. Nine different ethnic groups.

More than a hundred thousand houses, 61 crèches and 361 schools for the children.

11 family planning and general health clinics.



42 full-time social workers and a host of health inspectors.

The largest hospital in Africa, and one of the best of its kind in the world at Baragwanath.

Hundreds of sports fields, dozens of parks. 4 large sports stadia.

7 swimming pools.

30 beer gardens, 4 dance halls and 2 cinemas.

A first—class hotel at Diepkloof.

A fine city...

But a city with something missing at the very foundation.

Somehow something has been left out in the development of the place.

And the result is that there are some very serious problems today.





THE WORLD, Thursday, June 17, 1976

BLACKS AND WHITES DIE AS MARCH BECOMES RIOT



Terrorism squads sent to riot

South African police units have been sent to the townships to deal with the violence. The units include the Special Task Force, the Special Branch, and the Special Operations Unit. The police are also using tear gas and live ammunition to control the crowds.

CAR RUSHES SHOT SCHOOLBOY TO CLINIC

A car carrying a boy who was shot in the head while running from a police car, rushed to a clinic. The boy, who was 15 years old, was taken to a nearby hospital where he is now recovering. The incident occurred during a protest in the townships.



Rioters in raid on Bara

Rioters in the townships have raided a police station in Bara. They looted the station and set fire to some of the buildings. The police are trying to contain the situation and prevent further violence.



more violence Soweto

Violence has spread to the townships of Soweto. There have been reports of looting and arson. The police are trying to maintain order and prevent further damage to property.



RIOT DEATH TOLL RISES

24 dead, 250 hurt

The death toll from the riots has risen to 24, and the number of people injured has reached 250. The violence has spread to other parts of the townships, and the police are struggling to control the situation. The community is in a state of panic and confusion.

seek probe

The police are seeking a probe into the riots to determine the causes and prevent further incidents. They are also looking for information about the people involved in the violence.

What is the Problem?

On the morning of June 16th 1976, ten thousand black high school pupils staged a protest march. Chanting Black Power slogans and waving crude and inflammatory placards they marched through the streets of Soweto...

The demonstration was supposed to have been a peaceful one. Unfortunately it didn't stay that way. The police moved in and tried to disperse the marchers. Stones were thrown. Shots were fired.

And the "*peaceful protest march*" exploded into an orgy of fighting, burning, looting and killing.

The violence went on for four days, and when order was finally restored, it was found that 176 people were dead and over a thousand injured.

Incredible as it may seem, there are still many people in South Africa who do not realise that there really is a problem in Soweto. There are still many people who dismiss the troubles of that city as no more than "*a storm in a teacup*". They point to previous disturbances in the townships and feel confident that it will all blow over before too long.

Unfortunately, far from blowing over, the unrest has continued to smoulder, and the disturbances have even spilled over into other townships, and even into neighbouring African states.

At the time of the riots in 1976, the Prime Minister of South Africa was in Germany, engaged in delicate negotiations on the Rhodesia issue. When reporters questioned him and asked just how serious the Soweto question was, Mr. Vorster replied that there was certainly a problem, but not a 'crisis'. It is essential that as Christians we see the question of the urban blacks in our country in this perspective; we must be careful not to overdramatize the situation as some newspapers have tended to do, but at the same time we must not underestimate the gravity of what has happened and what is still taking place in Soweto.

Whether we admit it or not, the riots heralded a subtle change in the social structure and the political climate of South Africa. People who are close to the township situation say that it cannot really be defined, but it is there nevertheless.



A black Christian from Rhodesia, a man who had been trained to be ‘an architect of terrorism’¹ before he became a Christian, spent several days in Soweto during October 1977.

When I interviewed him he said that Soweto is certainly not like any other black township in Southern Africa.

The people of Soweto, he said, are sophisticated city people who are very much aware of their identity as such. They do have problems and grievances, and *“unless these grievances are taken seriously, you will be giving Soweto to your enemies on a plate.”*

It is foolish and naïve for South Africans to imagine, as some do, that the riots in Soweto and other areas are no more than the work of “*Communist Agitators*”, and to go back to sleep with the complacent thought that “*the police will deal with the matter*”. But on the other hand, it is downright stupid to deny Communist influences. It is abundantly clear from the pattern of events on the day of the riots and even more so from the things that have taken place since then that well-trained troublemakers have definitely been involved in the disturbances both in Soweto and in other places.

Various newspaper reports of the time record that after the disturbances were well under way in Soweto, cars with Johannesburg registration numbers were seen in other townships along the reef, and that wherever they appeared, trouble flared up. It is reported, for example, that people at Natalspruit, near Germiston, ran to the police station with the words, “*God help us, the agitators from Soweto have come here!*”





If this is not enough, then we have the statement made by a certain Mr. F.A. Tabeev, a member of the Praesidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union when he visited Dar es Salaam in October 1976. Addressing a public meeting he said, *"The recent events in South Africa were not a spontaneous happening. They were the result of the work of organised national liberation movement officials of the African National Congress (now banned in SA), operating on a broad front which embraced workers, students and people from rural areas, including whites, coloureds and Indians."*

But why should this be? Why should there be so much attention focussed upon Southern Africa?

We can accept that some people are genuinely concerned about the welfare of the black people of Africa, but we have reason to wonder about others, especially the communists!

I believe that we need to realise (if we have not already done so), just how important our country really is, not only from a political/military and economic point of view, but far more important, from a Spiritual point of view.

Politically and Militarily, South Africa is one of the most strategically important countries in the world today. Lenin declared that Southern Africa would be one of the main obstacles to the communist's programme of world conquest, and military strategists of all shades of opinion have repeatedly underlined the fact that to control the Cape sea route would be to control much of the Indian Ocean and the south Atlantic enabling any hostile power to have a stranglehold on Britain, Europe and America.

Economically South Africa occupies an important position in world commerce. Our gold and other minerals are constantly needed by the insatiable factories of many countries, an enormous amount of foreign capital is invested in SA. All of the attempts in recent years to isolate the Republic from the rest of the world have only served to underline the fact that the economic importance is such that many countries would rather risk censure than cut their ties with SA.

And the latest trade figures show that many countries in Africa are increasing rather than decreasing trade with THAT country. All of which makes South Africa an attractive prize in the eyes of the power-mad and unscrupulous. But more important than any of these is the Spiritual Significance of this country.

In spite of the many failings and shortcomings which are so often pointed out and which we are only too keenly aware of, South Africa is still basically *"Christian"* and God-fearing, certainly much more so than many other countries in the world today.



It is the last country in the world where the largest Churches still respect the Bible as the Word of God and try to preach Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

In a world which is more and more rejecting God and the authority of His word, this is anathema. And there are forces and people in the world who will not rest until they see this destroyed.

Christians in South Africa dare not underestimate the determination of communist and antichrist forces to bring this country to her knees and thereby to gain control of the whole of the subcontinent. They have demonstrated only too clearly in all too many countries in the world that they will do anything to gain their ends. Lies and subversion are their stock-in-trade. They use any and all means to undermine respect for government, police, army and all who are responsible for maintaining law and order. Films, television, radio, books, magazines, newspapers and the like, all are employed to break down moral standards and to promote dissatisfaction and unrest in order to create conditions in which they may gain control of a country.

We have the sworn testimony of many ex-communists that they had been given expert training in the art of incitement, fanning grievances - real or imagined - into confrontation and conflict with the authorities to promote confusion and anarchy.

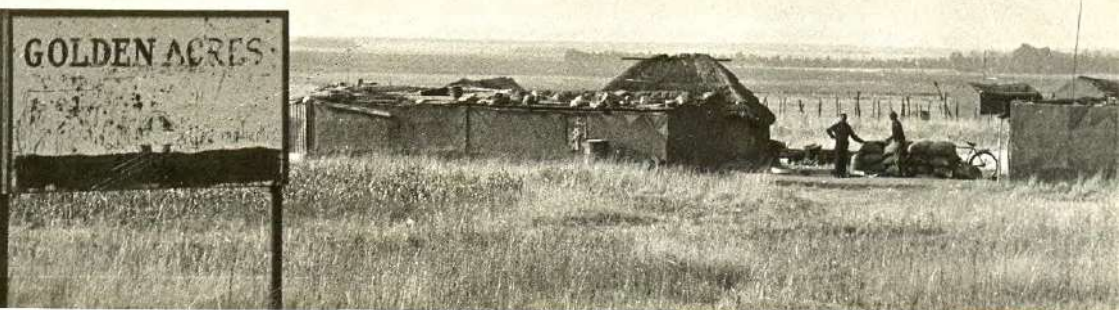
In other words, to minimise or to ignore the significance of events in Soweto and other black urban centres over the past eighteen months or so is to ignore the rumblings of a volcano.

Common sense as well as Christian concern demands that we listen carefully to what urban blacks - and especially those in Soweto - are saying with their words and their actions.

In this regard it is worth repeating the warning contained in an editorial in the magazine *"To the Point"* of August 5th 1977:

"Beware of any reliance on the effective power of the silent majority. That's the message coming loud and clear from Soweto these days. It does not mean the majority cannot be trusted. What it does mean is that if the radicals get the bit between their teeth it will take more than a majority of numbers to stop the chaos. These days the very name Soweto has about it a volcanic rumble that has reverberated round the globe. Test that statement in Britain, Germany or the United States and you will find it true, yet there are still South Africans, wide-eyed and innocent, who imagine that the four-fifths of sober-minded black citizens will, by their numerical weight, restrain the momentum of events. On these grounds they are quieting public concern, assuring us that, after all, the ferment of Soweto is at worst a temporary fever to be cured by a few wise pills of compromise or administration. Not so. By underestimating its importance they cause people to lapse into a comfortable sense of false security.

Before you accuse me of alarmism let me say at once that we obviously need the support of the moderates, the four fifths. The crux of the problem is how to get it and not to alienate it. And further, how to persuade moderates to become militant in their moderation. If that sounds like a phrase from Dublin, it isn't. It simply means that the moderates must be as firm in their stand for a middle way as the radicals are in their conviction that confrontation is essential. By middle way we mean negotiation and co-operation. That applies to both sides, black and white. Gone are the days when white authority could, by virtue of itself, bypass negotiation and act simply by decree. South Africa will not stem a flowing tide of revolution - of which Soweto has become a sort of living symbol - by a display of power, or by administrative adjustments. But neither will it stop this tide by a spineless surrender to every black demand.



No longer the simple, rural or tribal people of yesterday, many of the people of Soweto are sophisticated urbanites, businessmen and their wives, people who are completely at home in the streets, offices and departmental stores of the Golden City.



What then are the positives? Deflect it by clear political goals, negotiation between whites and recognised black political leaders, and acceptance of the fact that Soweto's basic discontent is not about social conditions but about political frustration, initially at municipal level... the fact is that the urge towards autonomous control of Soweto and the transformation of it from a dormitory into a living city with all of the amenities and industries that belong to city life, can no longer be ignored."

Sadly, this is something that very few white South Africans have realised as yet. Too many good and well-meaning people still see Soweto as little more than a glorified kraal, or maybe an overgrown location, with a number of tribesmen who have temporarily exchanged their blankets for western dress, a passing phenomenon which will disappear when all of the homelands become independent states. But this is a short-sighted and selfish view which only tends to aggravate the problem, for it makes it difficult for us to appreciate the fact that whether we like it or not the urban blacks are with us to stay. They have cut themselves off from their tribal roots, and have no longer got all that much in common with the more simple people of the homelands.

Many of the people of Soweto are second and third generation urbanites and are deeply offended to be treated as simple tribesmen.

Nor is it fair to point out that *"every country in the world has its slums"* and to say smugly that the people who live in Soweto are *"so much better off than most of the blacks who live in the rest of Africa"*. The grim truth is that very, very few of the people of Soweto have ever seen their poorer brethren in the rest of Africa, nor do they care about them. Their only standard of comparison is glittering Johannesburg next door, and the standard of living enjoyed by the white people with whom they rub shoulders every day as they work and move in that city. They would not be human if they did not find the comparison onerous.

Many of them work in or have to deliver parcels to the comfortable, spacious homes in and around Johannesburg and at the end of the day they go home to their small and cramped houses, often having to share with another family.

In this regard it is revealing to read through newspapers from the early part of 1976, and to find that the major complaint from the people of Soweto at that time was the lack of housing and accommodation. In spite of the massive building programme of recent years there is still a serious shortage of houses in the complex. Recent developments in regard to home ownership in Soweto will certainly improve the situation, but the problem is still as real as it was when the Star reported, rather scathingly, on May 14th.



Lo Puza, the drink...

Old-style shebeen queen
(Moroka 1948) with her
potent brew...

A scene in WRAB's Diepkloof hotel.



“To describe Soweto as a community, let alone a city, is not really accurate. It is just a huge conglomeration of people living without many of the accepted amenities of life. Physical security, schools, decent sanitation and roads, electricity, proper shopping and recreational facilities, civic government and even basic housing which is now at a record backlog.”

But such an assertion ignores the tremendous improvements that have been made over the past few years, and leaves us with the impression that these things will be the panacea for all problems if only they are provided.

Unfortunately, the matter is not quite as simple as that. There are much deeper issues in the problem of Soweto than meet the eye. We must remember that the Soweto of today is heir to many of the sorrows and problems that have beset its development from the very beginning, together with a few new ones which have come about as a result of various world-wide developments which have taken place in recent years.

We have noted in the first chapter that the phenomenal population increase has always outstripped the provision of housing. Newcomers arrived and babies were born much more quickly than houses could be put up. Most of the money which was needed to build houses and to provide facilities and services for Soweto came from the white taxpayers. During the years that the Johannesburg City Council was responsible for the townships, they frequently subsidised the building programme and the running costs from their own income from ratepayers etc.

Every effort was made to enable Soweto to pay for at least some of its own expenses. Rentals for houses and fees for various services were low, but they brought in some revenue. Another scheme which brought in a great deal of money was the sale of sorghum beer to the blacks.

When the West Rand Administration Board took over the administration of Soweto, they continued and expanded this controversial policy. Further beer-halls were built and a number of off-sales stores. Over a hundred and ten million litres of Bantu Beer are brewed and sold every year. A great deal of advertising is done to encourage the people to patronise the beer-halls. The more they drink, the better the facilities that can be provided.

It is certainly a highly questionable way to pay for the building of a city. *“Our people drink too much. If it is not in the beerhalls it is in the shebeens and even at the house. It was a bad thing when the government said that we can also buy the white man’s drink. It is too strong and makes the men mad. Even the beer makes them fight sometimes, but it is not like the brandy.”*



Drunkenness has always
been one of Soweto's Major
social problems.



If they do not kill each other when they are drunk, then the tsotsis catch them and take away their money. If they have any left after drinking so much. Many, many times the father will spend all of his money. on the drink and has nothing left when he gets to the house."

There have often been protests about this policy, and the degree of dissatisfaction seems to be underlined by the fact that during the riots the beerhalls and bottle stores were prime targets along with most of the WRAB offices. Not one was left standing, they were all burned to the ground.

Since then there have been protests from all sides, and many of the people of Soweto have joined in the appeals that the beerhalls should not be rebuilt. For several months the officials of the WRAB gave sympathetic attention to these appeals and did not begin rebuilding the offending places.

And the shebeens and the illicit sellers did a roaring trade. In place of the carefully controlled and somewhat nourishing sorghum beer people were taking to hard liquor and the various deadly concoctions which some of the shebeen queens served up.

Worse, quite a few of the shebeens provide prostitutes along with the booze. The cure seemed to be worse than the disease. So the WRAB began to rebuild the beerhalls.





A Friendly game...



They had learned the same lesson that the Americans did during Prohibition. Namely that you can't legislate people into becoming sober citizens. And that if you cut off one source of liquor, the customers will quickly find another. And will possibly be even worse off than before.

Mr. Mulder of the WRAB is deeply concerned about these shebeens for they are a source of much trouble in various ways. There are often knife fights on the premises and while not all of them provide the added attraction of willing young girls, those that do are often the source of disease...



Off-course totalizator...

The board has thought seriously about granting licenses to bona fide clubs and the like. But even that will not solve the problem of drunkenness which is far too common in Soweto.

It has been argued that the communal beer-drink has always been part and parcel of African social life, but the way in which it has been commercialised and exploited as a deliberate policy cannot be justified.

Sadly, as in almost any community in the world, there are other evils which seem to go with drunkenness. Immorality, Gambling and Murder.

African men, who have a boisterous love of life on the whole, seem to have an inveterate love of gambling. You may go into any town or city you like in the Republic at lunch times and you will certainly find excited groups of men around a simple gaming-board, or a dog-eared pack of cards or even - more seldom - a pair of dice. When liquor is added to the excitement of the game, the results are often fatal for someone in the group.

The blacks had always had their own simple games of chance, but they learned other tricks in the townships.

The Chinese introduced them to Fahfee. Tickey a game and you could become rich! And the white men introduced them to horse-racing and provided off-course betting at the totalisator..

Too many blacks, who can least afford it, have become enslaved to this vice, *"the sport of kings."*

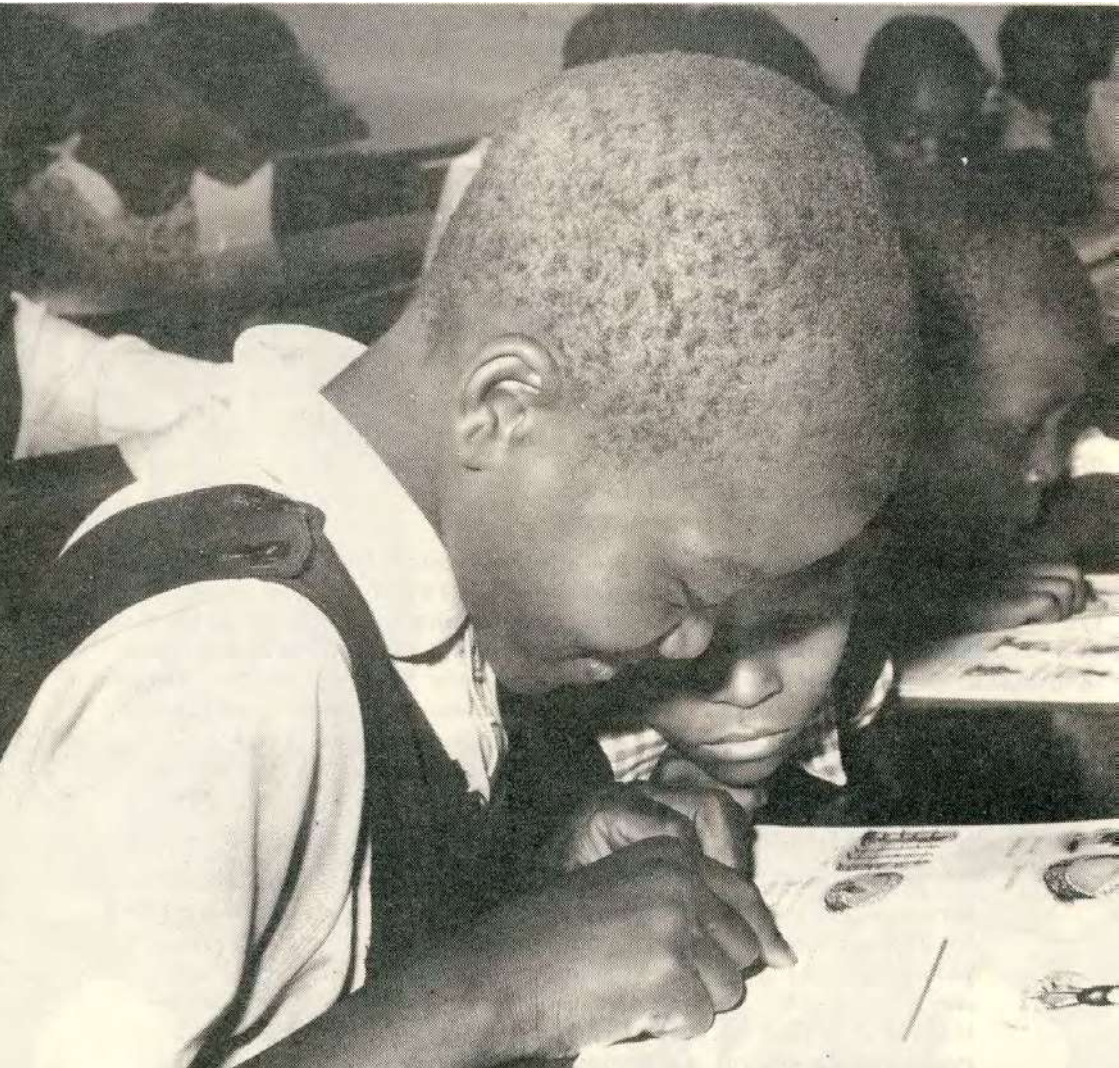
But human weaknesses like these, and the sorrows that they bring do not make headlines, nor even get into the newspapers all that often. Only riots reach the front pages.

Ostensibly the root cause of the rioting which began in June 1976 was the fact that as from the beginning of 1975 the Department of Bantu Education had been enforcing regulations which had been passed in 1955 to the effect that English and Afrikaans, the two official languages of South Africa, were to be evenly divided as the medium of instruction in black secondary schools outside of the homelands. The scholars protested that the use of Afrikaans was 'degrading' their education and would limit their career and job opportunities.

An article in the Rand Daily Mail of June 21st 1976 goes so far as to state:

“African leaders on the Reef told yesterday of their vain three-year battle to inform the government of the impossibility of introducing the dual medium system into African schools. At an urgent meeting in Johannesburg yesterday more than 60 African teachers told the chief executive of KwaZulu, Chief Buthulezi, how they had finally resorted to giving gardening lessons in Afrikaans to meet government requirements.

Recently, teachers have been driven to teaching Mathematics in Zulu and then, while the children were writing it down, translating the instructions into Afrikaans purely for the sake of government policy, Chief Buthulezi was told. Members of the African Teacher’s Association and Soweto educationalists said



they first pointed out to the Department of Bantu Education the impossibility of using Afrikaans as a teaching medium in Reef African schools in 1973. They told also of contradictory departmental instructions, refusals by officials to discuss their case and finally, this year, of representations to South African Embassy officials in New York, London and Bonn."

However, whatever the truth of the matter may have been - and there have been many lengthy discussions at every level and several changes in Bantu Education - in spite of the fact that the language issue was put forward as the primary reason for the demonstrations which resulted in the riots of '76, there are several things which seem to indicate that this was not the real issue at all.

One observer who has been closely involved in the situation for some time stated, *"The issue of using Afrikaans in the schools was the match, but various people had been building up a very inflammable haystack for some time; they had constructed it of distortion and half-truth. It burned well and the only thing that will really put it out is truth."*

There is the fact that several schools were involved where the medium of instruction has always been English, together with the too- professional pattern of events since the disturbances began, force us to the conclusion that there are much larger issues at stake than are immediately apparent.





The Star of June 20th 1976 reports a certain Mr. Rahede as saying:

"The government will stamp out the present explosion of unrest, but that will not solve the fundamental problems. The question of Afrikaans was the flashpoint, but the language issue is symbolic of the kids' rejection of a lot of other things. They are rejecting the imposition of the whole white establishment as a system plus the norms and values of whites."

A prominent black Christian tried to explain the reasons for this to me.

"Up to now," he said, "black parents have always been very close to their children. But try to imagine what it does to these children when they sit every night at the supper table and so often they must hear how their parents have been humiliated by whites. They hear of how the clerk at the pass office shouted



at their mother and threw her pass at her like an animal. They hear of how their father, who may be a well-educated man must say 'yes baas' to the young white man who has just today started work and knows nothing of the job that the black man has been doing for the past twenty years. They must listen to their mother tell them how the shopgirl spoke to her, and how their father was pushed out of the way and called 'kaffir' in the street. They listen, and I know that it does something to them deep down inside, for they are modern young people, they are not like we were when we were children.

They read the newspapers, these modern teenagers, and they know what is happening in the rest of the world, and they say, "No one will treat me the way they treat my father and my mother." And so they become rebellious and listen to talk of revolution and killing."

Only a fool would dare to ignore the 'winds of change' which are blowing across Africa today, stirring up the dust in the streets of the townships of South Africa today. We dare not try to cling to the status quo of yesterday and imagine that the black peoples of Soweto will not be affected by the emerging black consciousness of our day, or that they have no reason to feel resentment about their lot - the restrictions imposed upon them by certain laws, and at the callous and unfeeling way that they are treated by too many whites who will not or cannot see them as human beings.

It is true that the black peoples of South Africa do enjoy many advantages over, and generally have a higher standard of living than the majority of their kinsmen throughout the rest of Africa today. But to hold up these 'advantages' and to ignore the other side of the coin, the restrictions, the injustices and



the indignities that they experience is to play right into the hands of the enemies of peace and freedom who are clamouring for the destruction of South Africa and all that this country stands for, the good along with the bad.

The citizens of this country, and especially those who consider themselves to be Bible-believing Christians, must realise that there are demonic forces at work in our modern world.

Forces which have been so successful with their incessant chorus of "*Liberation now!*" that they have persuaded the world that any means is justifiable so long as the black people of Southern Africa are "*liberated*" from their white "*oppressors*". In the most amazing way the eyes of the world have been blinded to the fact that this process of "*liberation*", as practised by communist "*freedom fighters*" has, without exception, brought anarchy, suffering, death and destruction to those whom they are pretending to liberate, and has imposed a slavery never known before in the history of the world in those countries where "*liberation*" is complete.

When you discuss this with Sowetans, you find that there are some who are aware of the truth of this, and who know full well what has taken place in Mozambique and Angola and in other parts of Africa (the old bush telegraph still works pretty well!), but that somehow they are in the minority. Too many are being deceived by false and misleading propaganda - don't people generally believe what they want to think is true? Many are being persuaded that they "*have nothing to lose but their chains*", and that the fuller life lies in their throwing in their lot with the "*freedom fighters*".

The sophisticated people of Soweto, especially the young people, are very much aware of political and social developments in the countries of Southern Africa and the world at large. They follow the course of negotiations in Rhodesia and South West Africa with bated breath and can tell you who said what at UNO.

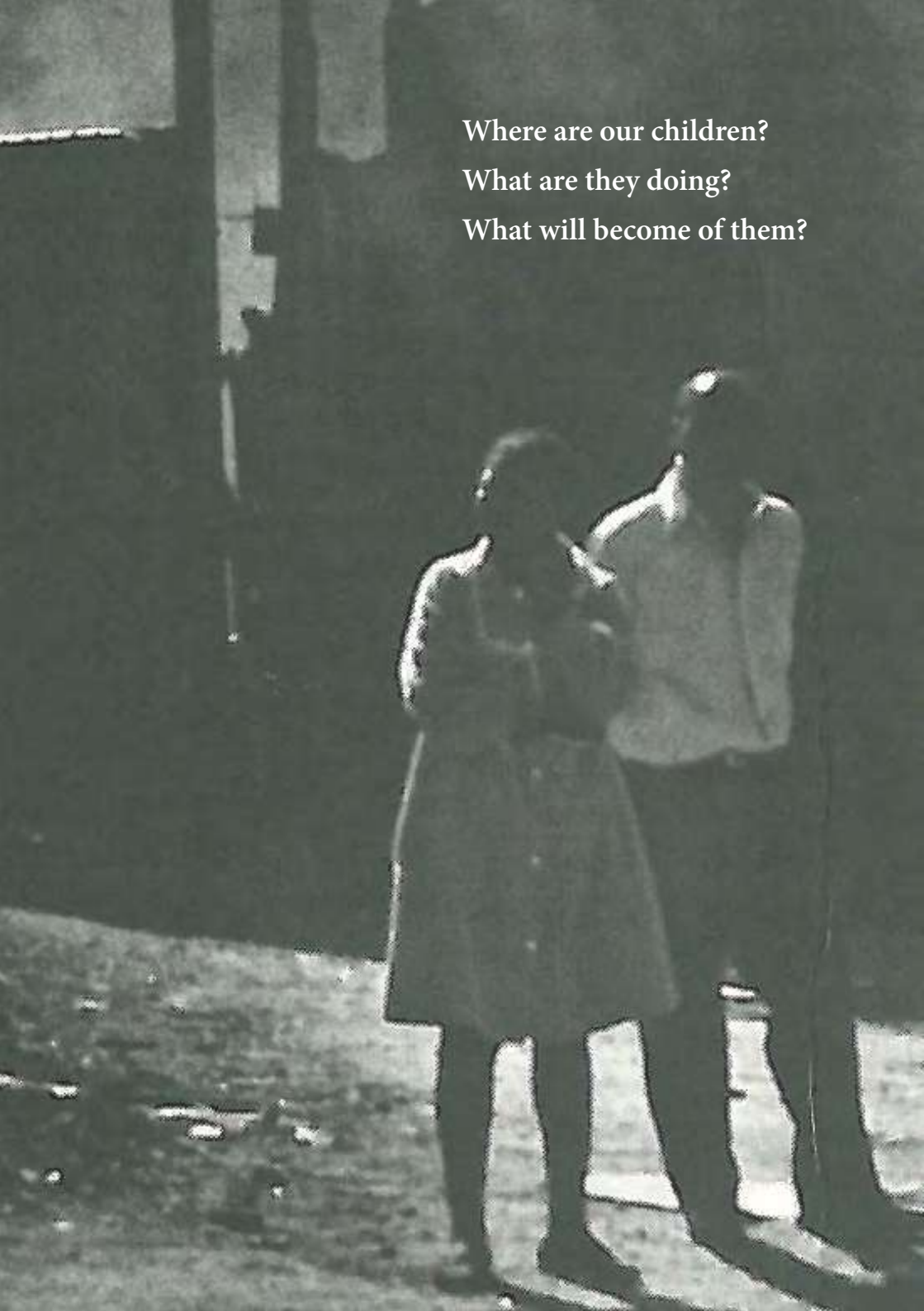
The Rand Daily Mail sums up the resulting situation in an article entitled, "**Soweto's Lost Generation**" (August 6th 1976):

"Parents of school-going children in Soweto or in other black townships in the Transvaal are facing a heart-breaking dilemma. Their children are turning against them. The children are blaming their elders for collaborating too long with the apartheid system. This message shone through this week when I interviewed a number of black parents and teenage high school pupils."

Where are our children?

What are they doing?

What will become of them?



The middle-aged black journalist with an eighteen year old son at high school said, *"It is breaking my heart to see my son changing overnight. He no longer confides in me, he jeers at me and his mother for working so hard that we can send him and his brother and sister to school."*

Many parents claim that since the first outbreak of serious rioting in Soweto and other townships the children, particularly the teenagers, have cast off their traditional African respect for the father of the family. A Soweto father said, *"When I asked my son of fourteen why he hadn't attended school that day, he replied, 'Why did you quit Sophiatown when Dr. Verwoerd ordered you to?'"*

A woman teacher, *"I have been going to school lately, fearing every minute of my time there. Other teachers feel the same, yes the men too."* A number of anxious black parents agree with my assessment that militant black students appear to be influencing the not-so-bright in the sub-teenagers. The bright ones get their less mature brothers and sisters to throw the stones and taunt the police. What these parents are wondering is from whom, if anyone, are the older and brighter students getting their instructions?

The validity of this last question has been underlined by the fact that after the riots in 1976, a good number of the teenagers who had been involved in the disturbances fled the country and went to neighbouring black states where they were given asylum. Some of them went to Swaziland, a country which has long been independent of white rule, with a black king and government. During the latter half of 1977, riots broke out in some of the schools of that country, instigated by the refugees who had come from Soweto.

Surely it is logical to expect that if these young people were really only protesting against the South African system when they demonstrated in Soweto, it would be unnecessary to make trouble in a country where there is black majority rule? We are forced to the conclusion that there is much more at stake than simply political grievances.

But it is the anguish of the parents that must make us pause to ask *"Why?"* Surely even the most serious political considerations should not be enough to bring about such a devastating rift in the family or so quickly break down the children's love and respect for their parents? One tries to analyse the cause, and thinks of some kind of brainwashing - or, from a Biblical point of view, something much worse.

It is too easy and simplistic to see the problem of Soweto merely in terms of a confrontation between blacks and whites. Newspapers in South Africa and around the world have done their best to make people believe that this is the case, but the picture of blacks and whites at each other's throats does not stand up to the harsh light of reality. The fact that many blacks risked their own lives to protect whites during the rioting, and some took food and coffee to the white policemen standing guard in the townships during the nights of the troubles simply does not fit the above picture.

Nor does it account for the fact that blacks took advantage of the confusion to attack and kill other blacks for reasons which had nothing to do with politics. Prominent churchmen who know the black Sowetans have stated bluntly that not a few of them took the opportunity to settle old grudges and feuds during the unrest.

Again, the words of an editorial in the June 24th 1977 issue of *"To the Point"* magazine are worth quoting:



"The main difficulty with Soweto has not been Soweto itself. The problem has been those who want Soweto to be a problem. Secondly, it has been those who have lacked the imagination to reduce the matter to its essentials, and to develop an overall plan of action based on these essentials.

The problem-seekers are easily discerned. Mainly, they are the city's radical youth and students who want the power, status and political clout that they believe making a problem of Soweto can bring. Likewise easily identified are those who are muddle-headed about the essentials. They include some national and local policy-makers and administrators, white opposition party spokesmen. Press and

other commentators, and the millions who understand Soweto only in terms of the emotional and sentimental fervour that has stolen the headlines.

The essentials are quite simple. Nothing causes human beings so much misery as anarchy. The most important "human right" is to live under a government strong enough to maintain law and order. Thus the first prerequisite in Soweto is to prevent chaos and anarchy. This the police have done - with laudable restraint and maturity in avoiding loss of life and injury to property and people. Under the direct leadership of Brigadier Jan Visser, the police succeeded this time round in establishing co-operation with the blacks, for which the latter are also to be congratulated.

Again, whatever the difficulties in their lives imposed by Soweto's shortcomings, the great majority of the city's people seem to want law and order as much as they want the shortcomings removed. They also recognise the danger of the unrepresentative philosophy and methods of hard-line young agitators who want to extract all the capital they can in refusing to deal with white initiatives, and who appear determined to take power themselves, despite the fact that they have produced no convincing evidence of their competence to handle the delicate and complex task of managing a city of 1,2 million people."

Obviously, we could spend much time in analyzing and dissecting every aspect of the social and political tensions in Soweto, and of the various developments that have taken place since the riots. But I am not sure that this would help us to come to a proper understanding of the issues which we must face up to if we are to be realistic and practical in our approach to the problem.

An adequate assessment, from a Christian point of view, demands that we look much deeper than this. We must accept that we are not remote from these and other urgent social and political which must be given serious attention in these days. But more than that, we must realise that there are underlying spiritual factors which affect each of us very directly.

When we read through the newspaper reports about the terrible things which took place during the riots, we find that the trouble began when the students' protest march erupted into violence, but we notice also that the worst incidents took place when other elements moved in to take advantage of the situation. . .

The criminal element...



Some worked for a living...

... but some did not.



The roving gangs of tsotsis.

The won't-work types who saw in the disturbances a golden opportunity to loot and kill and enjoy themselves while their previously sedate and studious cousins were embroiled with the police.

We have mentioned them before, but I believe that this is one of the aspects of township life which we must not overlook, the young people whose lives have been twisted into wrong channels not merely because of poverty and privation - recent social surveys have shown that a fair proportion of these gangsters come from the not-so-poor section of the community, but by a downright - preference for their wild and lawless way of life.

They are the children of darkness. The darkness of greed, selfishness and sin. They are without God and without hope in this world and the next.

We may not overlook them in our assessment of the problem, for in their distorted lives we see only too clearly the real essence of the Problem of Soweto, that it is not political or social or cultural. The difficulties in those areas, serious as they are, are only symptoms of the disease.

The deepest need of our urban blacks is not merely to have better housing or social amenities, nor even to have greater political freedom and cultural identity. These are all important and may not be denied, but they are all superficial.

Psychology, philosophy, religion and our own experience all teach us that man's deepest needs are spiritual.

It is relatively easy to provide housing and electricity and food and clothing and amenities and recreational facilities and all the rest for people; it is perhaps more costly, but certainly not impossible, to restructure our society so that all sections of the population may enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

But if we fail to balance such developments and improvements with meaningful spiritual growth we will have failed hopelessly, and we will find to our dismay that we have only added to the problem.

All over the world in recent years there have been vast sums of money spent on betterment and rehabilitation and slum clearance schemes which have all succeeded in demonstrating only one thing, namely that it is not enough just to improve people's rights or circumstances or environment, you have to do something about changing and improving them at the same time.

Countless whites, at all levels of society, have learned the bitter truth that social benefits and political rights and material possessions do not make for happiness or contentment or even good relationships between people. For us to imagine that if we merely provide all of these things for the blacks it will



be like waving a magic wand over Soweto and that we will have sweetness and light as a result is to pin our faith to fairy tales and to build the future on shifting sand.

Man does not live by bread alone.

But unfortunately too many white Christians in South Africa have been willing to stand by complacently while a hard, materialistic society has thoroughly indoctrinated the black people into believing that material, social and political things are all that matter in life. And by our lifestyle we continue to reinforce this belief every day!

Much of the problem and the tragedy of Soweto lies in the fact that to a devastating extent the shabby, the shallow and the unchristian parts Of our "*Christian*" civilisation have been foisted upon simple and uncomplicated people and we have given them little or nothing to fill the heartbreaking gulf of spiritual need.

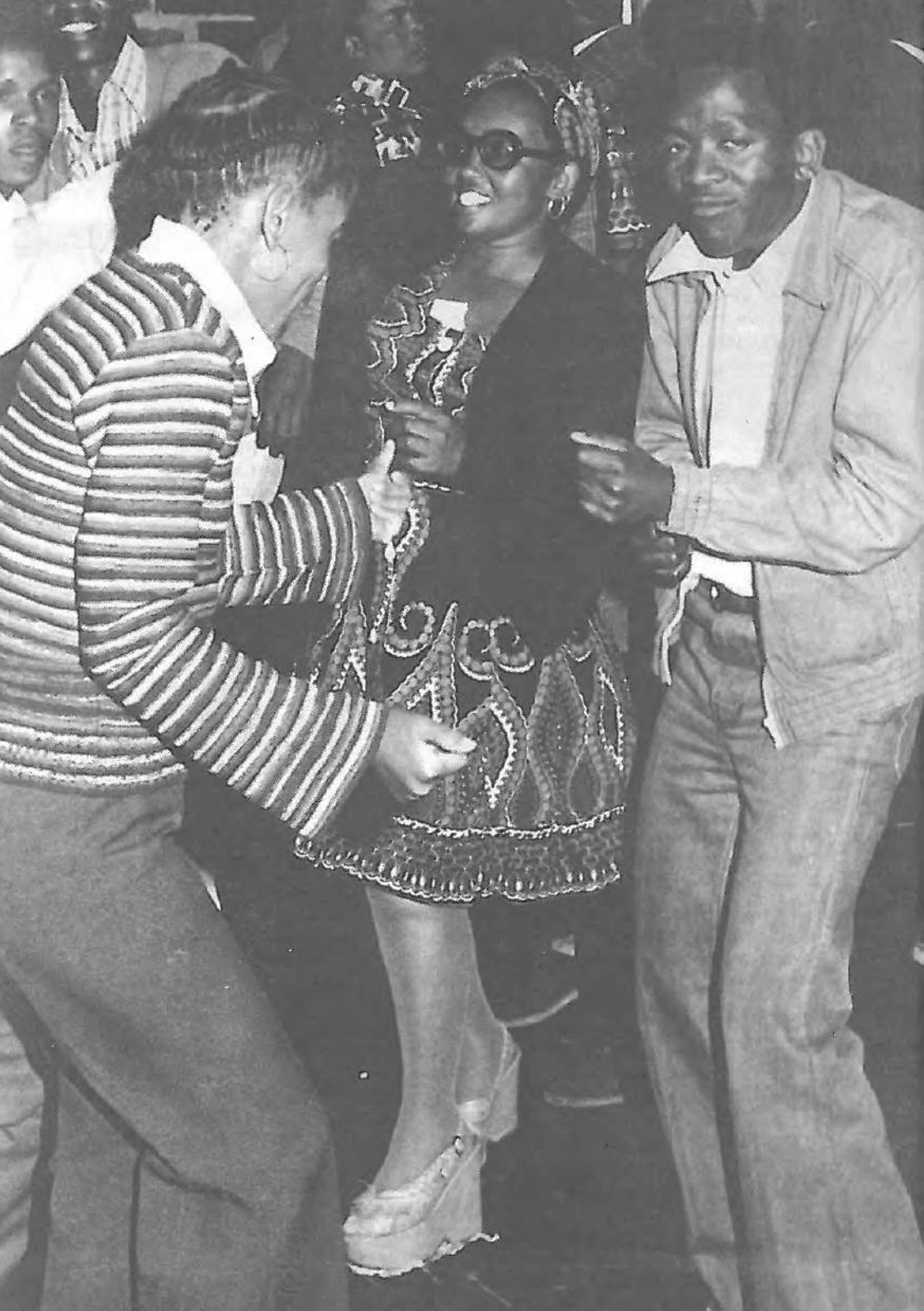
Make no mistake about this, because of the way that human beings are made, Someone or Something must and will fill that need!

To talk to the worldly-wise Sowetans is to realise just how deep that Spiritual need really is. You quickly find that some of them tend to look down on their more simple relatives out in the homelands with their 'primitive' ways of life and belief. They regard themselves as city people and pride themselves on their education (there are a fair number with degrees in the arts or the sciences), and they take it for granted that they should have a share in the material prosperity of the Republic. Over the past few years wages and salaries have risen rapidly among black workers, and cars and fine furniture are fairly commonplace in the Soweto of the seventies (especially in the upper-class suburb of Dube) .

Like cosmopolitans anywhere in the world, they are able to speak knowledgeably about many of the latest films. They have their favourite film stars and sports stars - with soccer idols at the top of the list!

Quite a few Sowetans spend their holidays away from the city, even overseas. For example, in 1972 some 54 000 Africans spent their holidays outside of South Africa, and there were no less than 3 327 business trips beyond the borders.

The African people enjoy laughter and music and dancing, and so it is only to be expected that there is a good deal of socialising at all levels of society in Soweto. I have been told that you can go to a party every single weekend if you want to.



A plain and simple beer-drink at the beerhall or the local shebeen for the men of the working class, which all too often ends in a drunken fight and stabbings. Or a Stokvas where friends meet to talk and drink and dance for maybe the whole weekend.

Much more uninhibited is the Famo, a wild session of sex and booze allegedly invented by the Southern Sothos, but certainly not confined to that tribe.

If you are that way inclined, you may be invited to a pyjama party. Or, if you are among the 'upper crust', to a cheese and wine party - A much more respectable way of getting drunk!

At all levels of society there is drinking and gambling and adultery; have they not learned the sophisticated and civilised ways of doing such things from the white man and his books and his magazines and his films?-

"You white people are strange. When you first came to Africa the black people did not wear much clothes. So the whites gave us clothes to wear and told us that it was wrong to be naked. Now it is the whites, especially the women, who do not wear much clothing. Now our young girls see this and they see that it attracts the men, so they also wear these new clothings that show off the body.

It is not good because it makes trouble."

We do not need to be reminded that many of the citizens of Soweto are in daily contact with whites of all kinds as they work and move in the factories and offices and shops and homes of Johannesburg.

The railways alone move half a million people a day... 250 000 each way to and from Johannesburg. Plus those who go by car or bus or bicycle.

It is natural that they will try to imitate the whites in many ways, both good and bad.

Tragically, they have learned to imitate the casual and nominal approach to Christianity that so many white people have - a formal go-to-church-on-Sunday-and-you've-done-your-bit-for-the-week religion which has no real meaning in their daily lives. Too many blacks have passed from primitive, tribal heathendom to a sophisticated, cultured heathendom and are much the worse for it. They have not truly heard the Gospel message, they have merely been inoculated against the Good News by the white man's sham Christianity.

Statistics would persuade us that over 62% of the total black population of South Africa have embraced Christianity as a religion but there are no figures to tell us how many of these have truly received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and have experienced the transforming power of God's love in their lives.

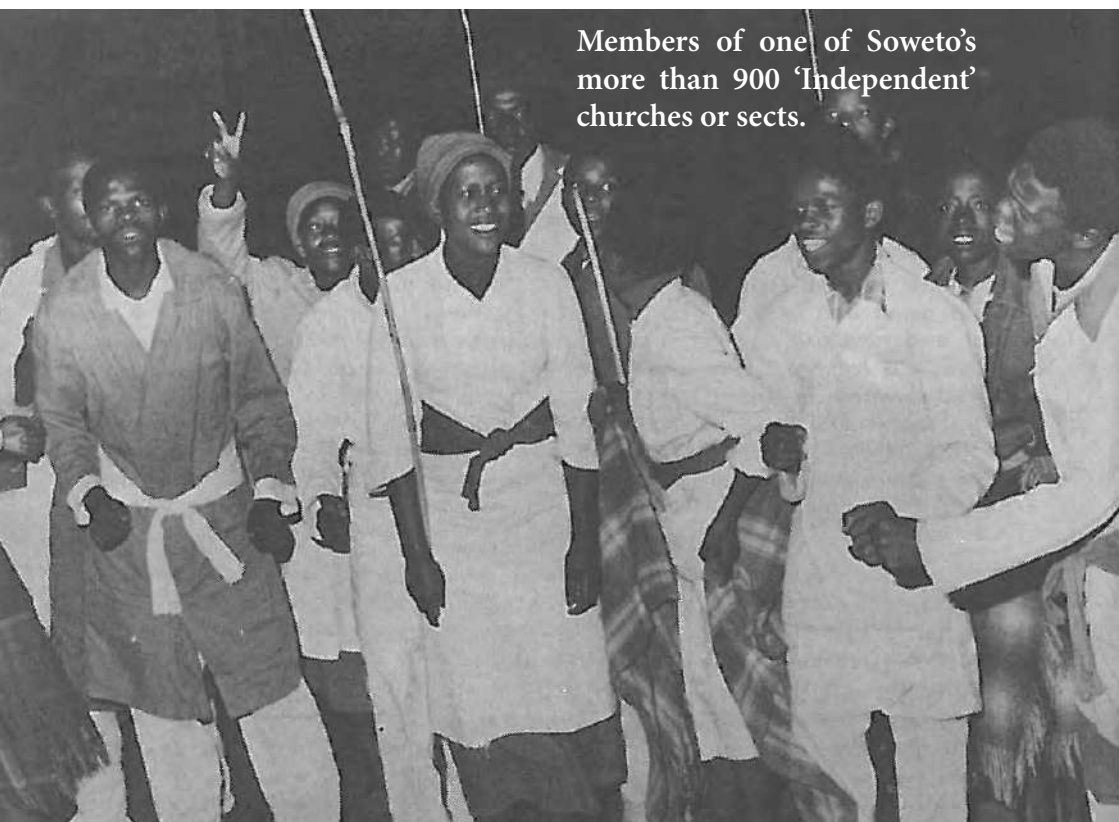
There are many, too many, churches in Soweto. All of the recognised denominations are there as well as all of the sects known to the whites. But there are many more, over 900 of the more than 2 000 independent African churches are to be found in Soweto.

If you were to ask any random selection of Sowetans, *"Do you believe in the old, primitive tribal religions?"* you would get a scathing look and a haughty *"Of course not!"* If you were to ask them, *"Do you go to church?"* the chances are that you would get an affirmative answer. Too many white Christians in South Africa will accept such statements at their face value and imagine that all is well, especially against the background of the above statistics.

"Look how many of them belong to the recognised churches.' Surely there is nothing wrong with them going to the Independent Churches? Some of them may be a bit wonky on certain points of doctrine, but..."

But the nub of the problem lies right here.

Members of one of Soweto's more than 900 'Independent' churches or sects.



The awful truth is that there is a famine of sound Christian teaching and of evangelical preaching in the midst of this apparent wealth of religion. When we get down to asking some searching questions, we start getting some heartbreaking answers, for the sad truth is that some of the larger historic churches have moved away from 'the faith once delivered to the saints'; under the influence of modernistic teaching which questions the fundamental truths of the Gospel, they have taken to dabbling in social and political issues rather than concentrating upon winning men and women to faith in Jesus Christ and building them up in their faith.

Liberal church leaders have declared that *"the world must set the agenda for the church"* and have succeeded in infecting the church with the modern madness of trying to change everything in order to be 'relevant'. A noted South African clergyman is on record as having stated that *"unless the church identifies itself with the political aspirations of the oppressed blacks it will become completely irrelevant to the young people of Soweto."*

All over the world in recent years we have seen churches which were once sound and evangelical becoming infatuated with strange man-centred *"theologies"* which have led them to supporting violence and terrorism in this desire to be 'relevant' to the 'social and political needs of the peoples of the third world'.

The result can be summed up in the words of a mother from Soweto:

"I do not understand what they are doing in my church today. The minister is reading from other books and he does not read from the Bible. And then he talks about the things in the newspapers. I am not happy in my church anymore."

A well-educated man who had been a staunch member of his church for many years said to me, *"One day I was in the church service and the priest started talking about Andrew Young and other American black leaders. Then, in the middle of this talking he gave the Black Power salute and said, 'I am trusting in the black Messiah now!' I did not go back after that, for if I want to hear about politics I will go to the ANC or something like that. I want to hear other things when I go to church."*

A high school pupil remarked, *"I do not go to my parents' church anymore. I used to think that it was a good church because they talked about the social and political problems that we black people have. Then one day a woman came to the school and told us about Jesus Christ. I wanted to hear more, so I looked for a church where they would tell me about Him. Now it is better for me."*



A professional nurse turned Sangoma...



She trains white students to become Sangomas.

Of course, human nature being what it is, there are many blacks who would much prefer churches that are concerned about their social and physical needs - unregenerate men and women will always prefer to have political issues in the minister's sermon than messages about sin and salvation.

The result is that many blacks do support the Social Gospel churches and deride the others as "*sellouts*."

Nevertheless, it is evident that the evangelical churches are growing as men and women, bewildered by the turmoil of events, are looking for true peace and security.

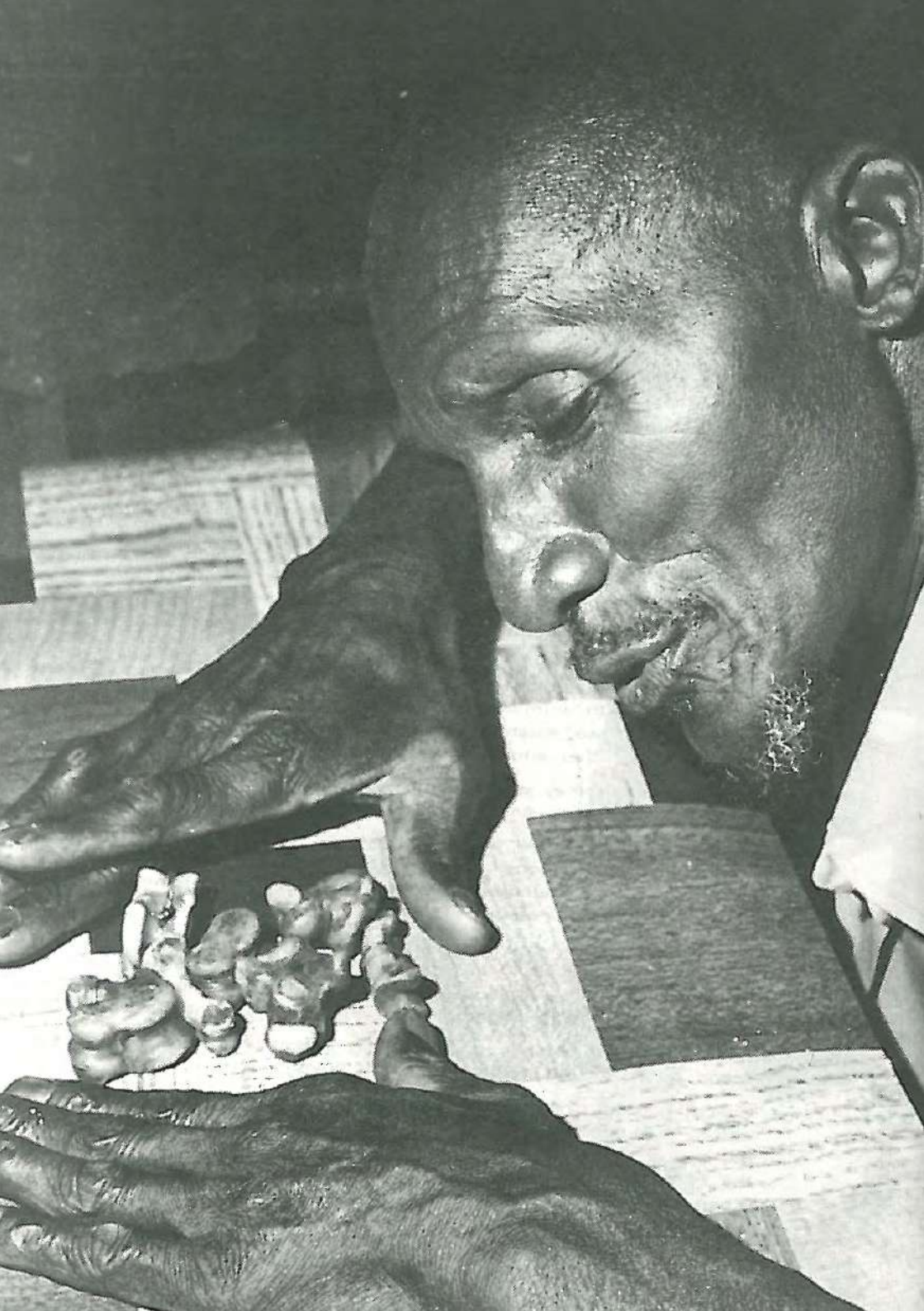
On the other hand there are the multitudinous Independent churches and sects - and the most rapid growth is taking place among these groups. A few of them are reasonably 'orthodox' by traditional Christian standards, having been started by disaffected ministers or members of Christian denominations. A few are even soundly evangelical, but the vast majority teach a bizarre mixture of Christianity or western philosophy together with varying degrees of ancestor worship and primitive African religions.

To the casual observer there would seem to be no harm in this, rather the advantage that they are at least doing something religious. One leading sociologist has stated that these groups grow rapidly because they provide a familiar environment to the newcomer to the confusing world of the city, a sort of 'home from home' where the familiar age-old teachings are revered alongside the newer and not-so-familiar ideas of Christianity and western thinking.

But any Christian who knows anything at all about these African religions will know that they are not as simple and harmless as many people would like to think them to be. From our 'superior' western platform we may easily scoff at tales of evil spirits, demon possession and the like as 'primitive superstition.'

But to do so is to deride teachings of the Bible on the matter, and to ignore the testimony of many sincere and Godly missionaries who have spoken and written of their personal experiences of just how real and dangerous such things are, for in truth the 'simple' religions of Africa are in many instances, a direct trafficking with the occult, the forces of evil and darkness.

Of course we cannot simply write off these Independent churches as all being riddled with animism or witchcraft and the like, for that is not the case. But we must recognise that many of them are certainly helping to keep alive and to foster these evil things.



But more than that, they are playing an important part in furthering another and much more dangerous movement.

Contrary to all of our comfortable theories to the effect that 'primitive superstitions' will simply disappear as the black peoples become educated and westernised, these things are actually on the increase.

There is today a very powerful and extensive movement in Soweto and also in many other townships in South Africa which is known simply as "Sipiri". It is a popular and growing movement, a super-secret religion with frightening ceremonies and rituals.

A movement which can supply spine-chilling evidence of witchcraft and control over certain demonic powers.

"Sometimes you have trouble with the people at the pass office. They take your book and stamp in it that you must get out of your place in seventy two hours and go back to the homelands. Then you go to the priest of the Sipiri.

They take you in the night and they say a prayer for you. They give you a bath in special water with blood and other things in it. Then they give you water to drink, also with things in, and you drink it until you vomit it up. Then more water until you vomit again, three times. Then this water at the back (enema) three times also. Then they say some big names over you (not the Trinity), and the next day you go early to the pass office and they fix your pass for you..." He shows his reference book, and there, several years back, are the official stamps.

A big, burly fellow tells me that he was a priest of the Sipiri before he became a Christian.

"I had no job and they told me that I must join the Sipiri. So I joined them and they did things to me, bad things, but I got a job, a good job, and so I began to be a Sipiri. I went and studied in another place and they taught me to pray (sometimes to God, sometimes to the ancestors, sometimes to other names, according to the occasion) for sick people and to do other things.

You go up in the Sipiri, step by step, and each time they teach you bigger things. Each time they give you a sort of verse from the Bible, they take the words from different places to make your verse and it is secret for you.

But it was like chains around my heart. I was bound, I was not happy. I looked and looked to be free. Then one day Maruti K. told me about Jesus. I took Him as my Saviour and now I am free. Yes, it was a hard battle, for the Sipiri do not let go easily, I thought that they would kill me, and some strange things did happen, but Jesus is stronger than all of them, now I am free."

A radiant, plump little mother of Soweto declares that: *"There are many people of the big churches who are in the Sipiri. They say that churches are not so good, but that when they have the church and the Sipiri then it is better, then they are strong."*

I asked her about the young people and she said, *"Oh yes, there are many young people who are of the Sipiri. If they are at school the Sipiri makes them clever so that they can get degrees and do other things that they could not do before."*

But it makes them strange also. Their brains are on and off. Sometimes they will work, sometimes they will do bad things, sometimes they will stand and stare at nothing, sometimes they will fall down dead for nothing."

The Sipiri movement is not political in any way, but it has definite ties with black consciousness, a resurgence of the demonic elements of black culture. Above all, it is certainly malevolent and evil. Many of the things that I heard of it can only be paralleled by the testimonies of missionaries who have worked in the depths of the African Jungle where demon possession is very real and the witchdoctor reigns supreme.

What Faith... What Hope?



But in Soweto?

“Yes, there are many of them. On Friday nights you can see them in the townships. The girls wear a white doek on their heads and the men wear other clothes...”

It does sound incredible to materialistically minded, science-orientated whites, but nevertheless it is true and frighteningly real, for even secular newspapers have reported the astonishing number of young people that are volunteering to be trained as Sangomas (witchdoctors). And it is evident that this is closely linked to the rise of the Sipiri movement, for I was told that the leaders will pray for guidance as to whether the person should become a Sangoma or a leader in the Sipiri movement.

But if it is not political, then what does it have to do with the problem of Soweto?

I am afraid that too many people will ask this question, for we have become so accustomed to separating the secular and the spiritual; we are certainly aware of the many social and political aspects of the problem of Soweto, but find it difficult to relate this kind of spiritual and religious phenomena to the problem.

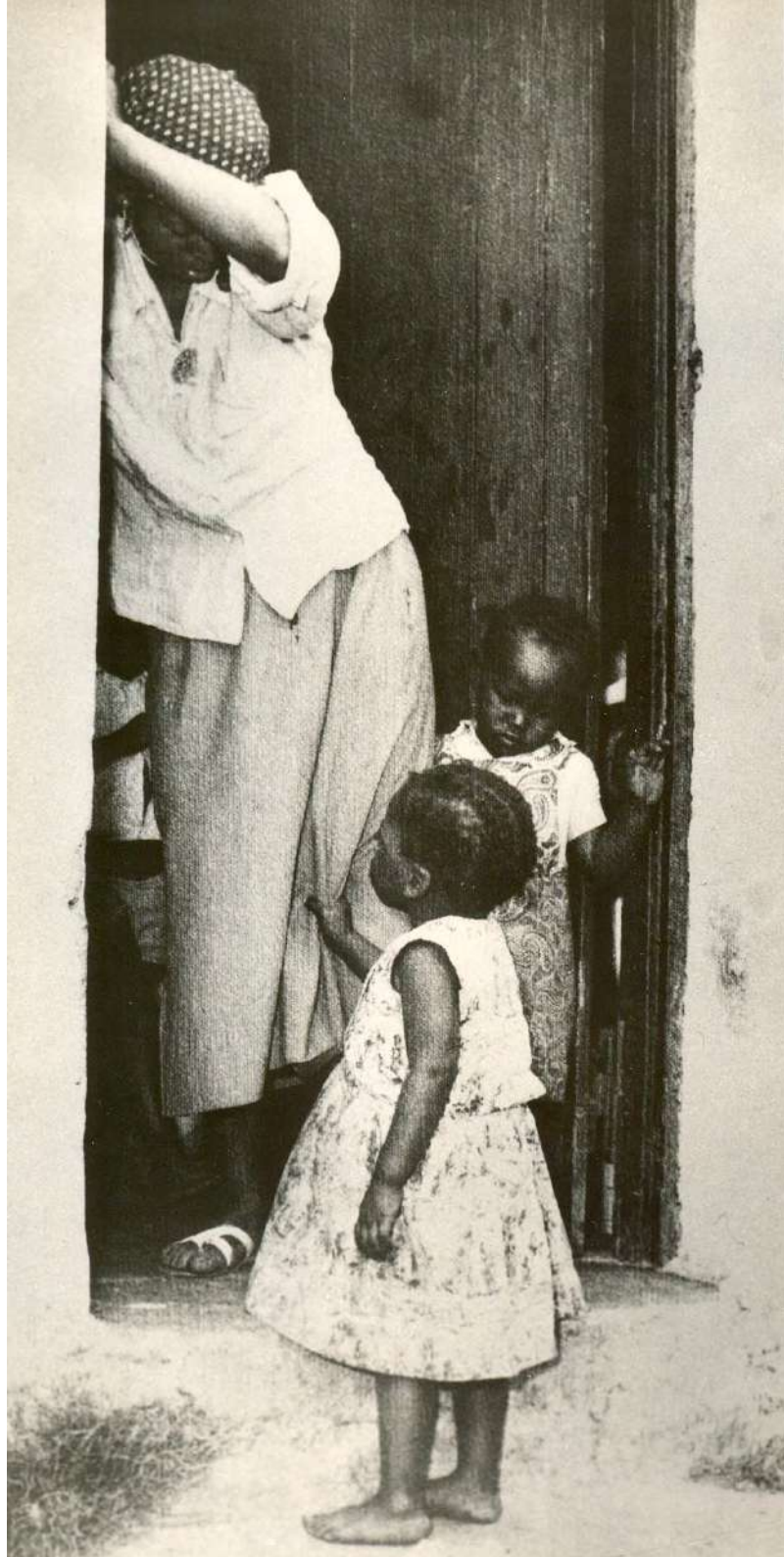
But man is a living soul, and what we have dealt with above is the most crucial aspect of the whole matter, for it highlights for us the so-easily-overlooked fact that it is basically and finally a Spiritual Battle which is being fought in the streets of Soweto and in the hearts of the urban blacks of Southern Africa today.

“My neighbour she is of the Sipiri. When I try to talk to her about the Bible she becomes angry. ‘That is the white man’s book and it tells us about the white man’s God. We are having all this trouble because we have left the spirits of the ancestors,’ she said to me. And there are others like her who say that it was better for us when we served the spirits. But I know Jesus, and I know that they are wrong.”

The ex-Sipiri priest said, *“If the spirits come to them, sometimes people get very strange. They will not listen to talking. They will take up the knife and will kill anyone who is in their way. They will suddenly become like different people. Good children become bad and will not obey their parents. They will believe in communism and anything else for it is the bad spirit that gets into them.”*

Only that kind of demon possession can account for this incident which took place on the day of the riots:

“The soldiers are coming and they are shooting!” The 39year old mother could hear the chaos in the street outside the school near her home.



When she went out to see what was going on she was horrified. Parents were hurrying to the school to fetch their children, there seemed to be armed policemen everywhere and all was noise and confusion. Fear was written on many faces.

Then her attention was drawn to her neighbour's house. She saw that her neighbour's three daughters were busy breaking the windows of their own home. *"What are you doing?"* she shouted.

"Leave us alone, we are going to kill our mother!" was the chilling reply.

"But why? She is your mother!" shouted the shocked Z., who is herself the mother of several children.

"From their faces," she says, *"I could see that they were possessed by the bad spirit that came down into Soweto on that day."*

Then an aunt came on the scene and tried to stop the girls. Mama Z. ran out to help her. But when they approached the girls, one of them whipped out a knife and threatened the two women, *"This is none of your business. Get away!"*

The two women were helpless and their lives were in danger, they were forced to retreat. Mama Z. invited the aunt into her house. Later she went out again, and, standing not too far from the three girls who were still trying to get into the house, began to pray aloud for them. This was too much for them. Suddenly she felt a sharp pain in her leg - one of them had thrown a brick at her. Their strange fury was now centred on her. They cursed her and threatened to burn her house down.

A father of five said sadly, *"I do not know my own children any more. They are like strangers to my wife and I. It is as if some terrible evil spirit has come into them to make them fight and kill like the tsotsis."*

Another mother of Soweto, grey hairs betraying her extreme age, after telling me of the many experiences that she has had in the ups and downs of the townships over the years said simply, while the tears trickled down her ebony cheeks, *"It is the devil. I know it is the devil. He has come down into the streets of Soweto and is having his own kind of revival meeting!"*

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12 AV

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12



It's a dark picture. . .

The facts about Soweto and the situation of the urban black people of Southern Africa today are not comfortable for any one of us.

That's why it is so easy for our newspapers to present a dark and gloomy picture without any hope short of complete surrender to all and any demands.

But we are not looking, at things from that point of view. We have glanced at a few of the problems and tensions of the townships. Some of which have arisen out of the historical development of Soweto,

And others which have arisen, or have been enormously complicated by world-wide developments in recent years. We have noted the inescapable fact that there are tensions of a social and political nature, and that these are being exaggerated out of all proportion by people who would like to capitalise on chaos and anarchy. We have dared to dig deeper than that.

We have realised that these things are not the basic problem at all, but that the root of the problem lies in the deep and urgent spiritual needs of the people of Southern Africa. Humanly speaking there are no answers to the awful problems and tensions of our country.

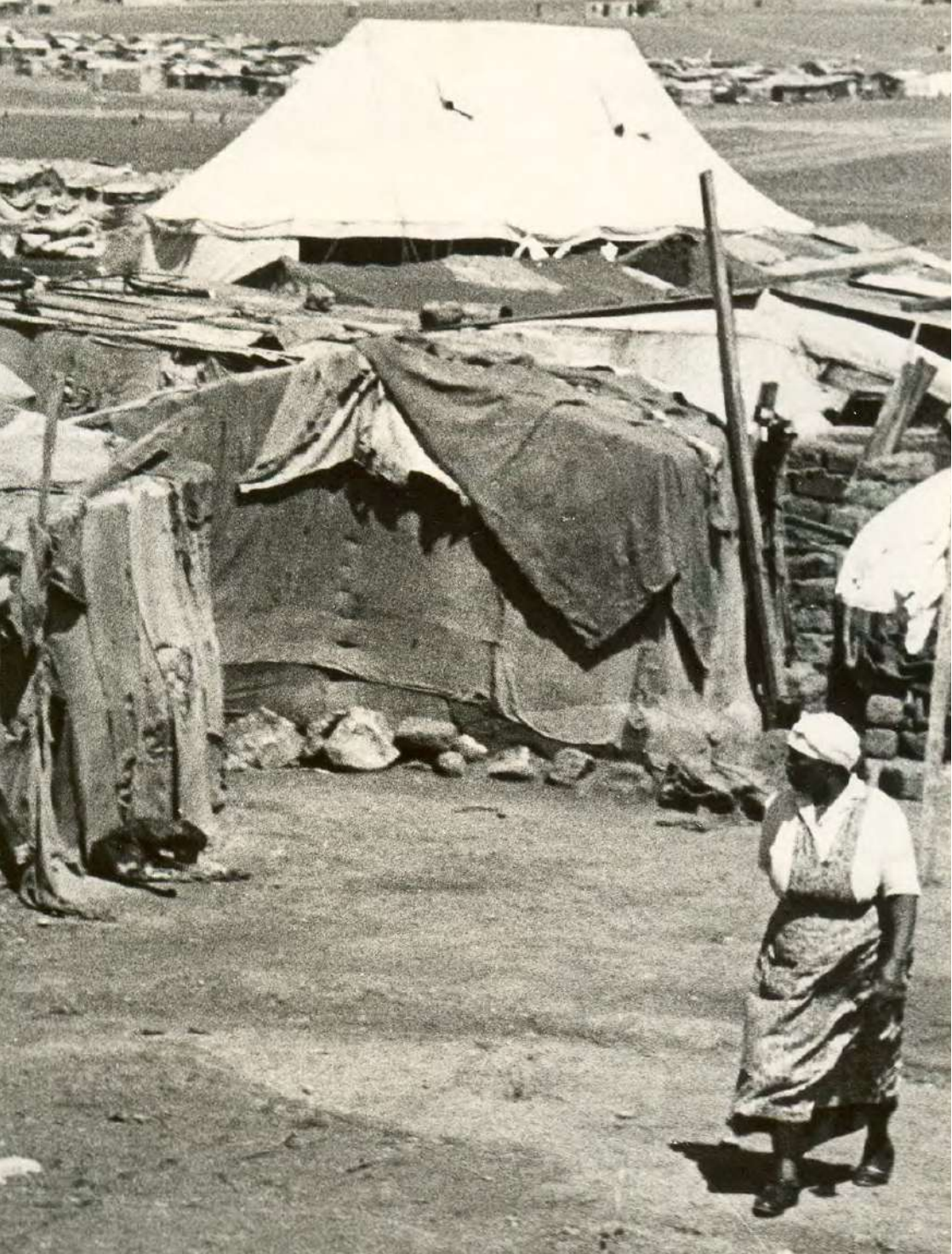
We have come to the impasse in which it is necessary to have policemen in the townships to maintain law and order, but the very presence of the police is resented and becomes a source of further tension and trouble.

Socially and politically we find ourselves faced with the impossible situation in which rightful and reasonable requests are framed together with outrageous demands - "*we want everything, yesterday!*" - and a refusal by the radical elements to negotiate on any reasonable basis.

The outcome is that every effort from either side somehow leads to greater confrontation rather than a lessening of the problem. But we are not looking at the problem from a human point of view at all. We are considering Soweto and the problems of Southern Africa from a Christian and Christ-centred point of view.

And our reply to the awful situation in which political and social and even "Christian" solutions have all proven inadequate is simply.

BUT GOD..!



The Dorothea Mission tent pitched in Moroka township in 1948.

Yes, all Praise to His Name, God is at work in Soweto today, just as He has been there from the beginning.

Down the years there have been remarkable events in the townships which have evolved into the Soweto of today, instances where Christian workers have experienced divine blessing and even protection in remarkable ways. There have even been instances where we have good reason to believe that God has intervened dramatically to prevent unrest in the squatters' camps and the locations from flaring up into a major confrontation with the authorities.

But more important than that, we have the testimony of multitudes of very ordinary people to the fact that God is at work in Soweto, and that not a few men, women and children have been gloriously saved as a result of the riots and disturbances!

It is a thrilling and heart-warming experience to talk to converts and evangelical Christian workers in Soweto in these days. I was privileged to interview quite a few such people, naturally the majority of my contacts were with people associated with the Dorothea Mission, but it is evident that the Holy Spirit is not confined to any one group or organisation; wherever the Word of God is being preached in truth and Jesus Christ is being presented as Saviour and Lord, wonderful things are taking place.

Unfortunately it is difficult to get any reliable information about evangelistic work in the locations and squatters' camps in the very early days. One or two people recall that their grandparents, or some of the old people who lived in the shanty towns have spoken about the occasional white person venturing into places such as Prospect Township and Sophiatown in the very early days to hold meetings and to conduct small Sunday School classes.

The plague of 1904 seems to have evoked considerable response from various churches in Johannesburg, but this was largely in the way of emergency relief, with little ongoing spiritual concern. From denominational records, however, it is evident that fairly early in the life of the camps and townships a need arose for the establishment of some kind of denominational oversight in the establishment of preaching stations etc.; there were people who had been converted to the Christian faith back in their home villages, and when they moved to the cities they looked about for others of like feeling and wanted to form their various churches.

Sophiatown, 1947.



It does not appear that much in the way of serious evangelistic outreach was undertaken in the various locations and townships before the 40's. It cannot be said with certainty that the Dorothea Mission was the first to undertake tent missions and door-to-door evangelism on a regular basis, but they were certainly

one of the pioneers in this kind of work in the black urban areas. From about 1943 their workers and evangelists have been conducting missions in some of the worst and the most dangerous locations in and about Johannesburg and many of the other great cities of Southern Africa, as well as in the smaller towns.

The years 1947 to 1949 were particularly bad years. The postwar slump had put many people out of work, and there was a great deal of discontent. Efforts to resettle some of the worst of the squatters' camps at Moroka resulted in ugly scenes, and several policemen were murdered.

A letter printed in the May 1947 issue of Dorothea News records the evangelist's experience of God's protection in such an incident:

"Yesterday at twilight we put up a sheet outside and started showing pictures. Many drew nearer and stood listening attentively. There was a lovely spirit amongst the people, and we believe God spoke to the souls of men and women.

Whilst I was saying the last few words in Sesuto, in which language I was speaking, somebody flung a stone at my head. I dodged it, however, and it struck me on the breast, where fortunately it did not hurt me very much. By the Lord's grace we went on quietly.

I went out to the location today. After the close of our prayer meeting we found the streets thronged with black people including a lot of policemen, black and white. I have never before seen such a riotous, blood-thirsty mass of people. I can't tell you what my eyes beheld today. It seemed the whole squatter's camp protested and even attacked the police who wanted to arrest some of them for illegally selling beer.

The police sent for help and more officers came to try and restore the peace. The squatters then formed a procession and walked past the police singing and challenging them. Hundreds of them armed with kieries and pickhandles cleared the way. Thousands flocked together near the camp. The leaders of the procession visited every little sack-building in the vicinity to assure themselves that everybody was partaking in the affair. In the end it appeared as if the fighters of the squatters were going to over-run the police. We saw them charging whilst shouting and striking with their kieries. They stopped in front of one of the officers. There they stood, flinging stones at the police whilst striking their kieries against one another."

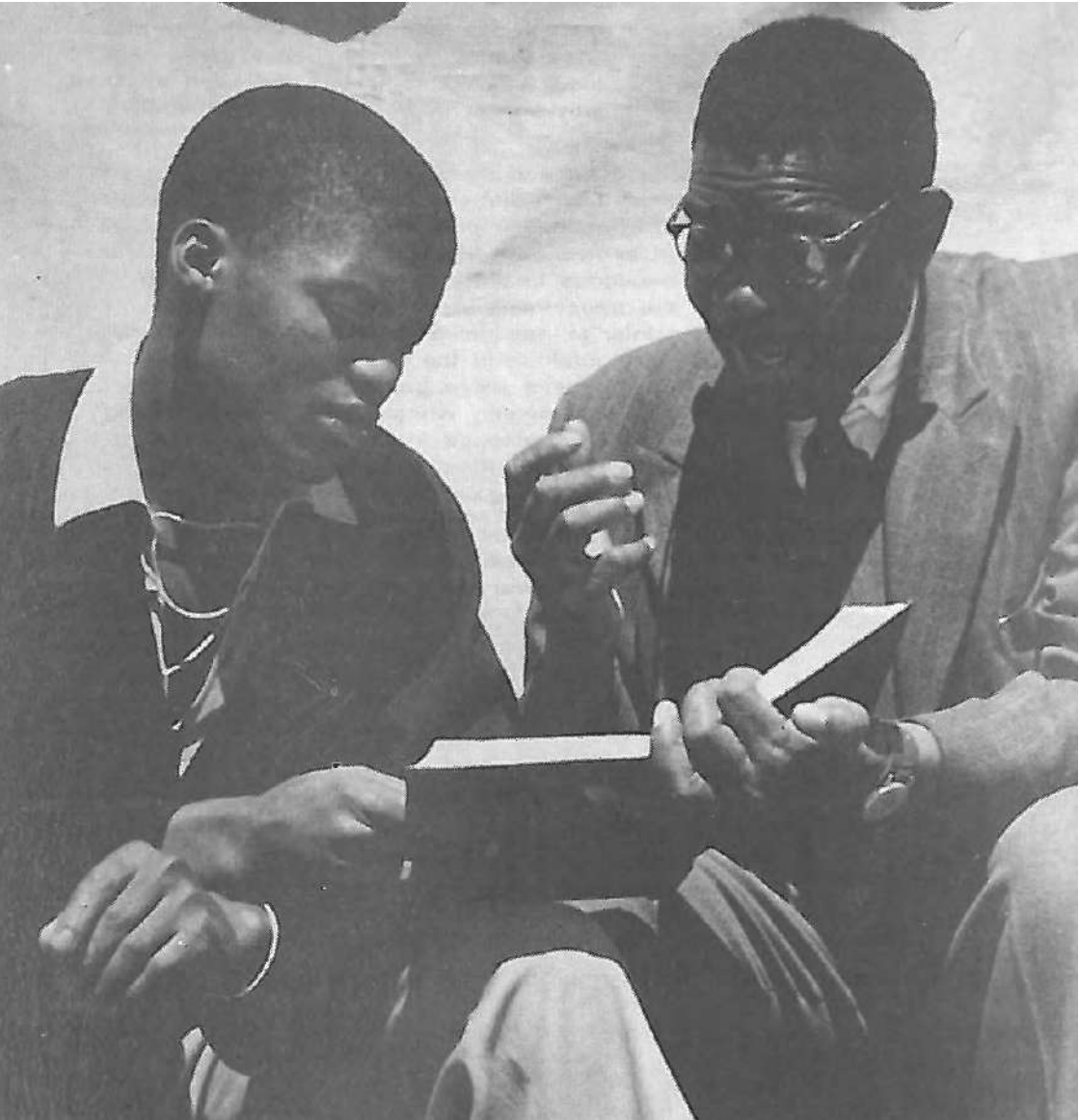
On the 15th of December 1947 the great marquee tent was pitched in Moroka township. The police had been very reluctant to give permission for the meetings, and had warned that they could not give any guarantee of protection.

But the workers prayed.

And the April 1948 issue of Dorothea News carried this report:
Armed Soldiers protect Dorothea Workers.

The radiant joy on student Festus' face as he related his story gave one to realise somewhat how he was blessed in his soul and strengthened in his God by what he and the others had experienced. He spoke more or less as follows:

"God graciously protected us during the tent campaign at Moroka. At night we slept in the large meeting tent and were surrounded by various dangers. There are those that hate the Gospel of Jesus Christ."



One morning early an old woman came to us and said, “*Were you not frightened last night?*”

“No, why?” we replied, “*We were fast asleep and know of nothing.*”

She then told us that a company of men had, unknown to us, undertaken to destroy the meeting tent by fire.

“*Last night,*” she said, “*they came with their flaming and smoking torches to burn the tent down on top of you. When they neared the tent they suddenly turned back.*”

After a time they approached your tent again, with their evil intention. They were excited and fully determined. But once again when they reached a certain point they stopped and retreated rapidly. They said that to their astonishment they found the tent guarded by a great number of fully armed soldiers, so that they dared not go nearer. They were unable to explain where the soldiers had come from.

We know that whilst we were asleep God had sent His angels in the form of armed men to shield over us and to protect us.”

It was during such campaigns in Moroka in the late 40’s that the workers and evangelists of the Mission learned many lessons of God’s provision as well as His protection. In the following year they set up their tent again in the same place with scarcely two pennies to rub together let alone to pay expenses.

Anxiously they set aside a day to pray for the money but instead of spending the time asking for money to pay their costs, they found that somehow God gave to them a sudden, heartbreaking insight into the desperate spiritual needs of the multitudes of people living there - and so they spent the time interceding on behalf of the people of Moroka.

In answer to their earnest prayers of that day, 37 men and women were converted, many of whom are still in full-time Christian service today.

One of the converts at this campaign was ouma M.

Before the campaign she had had a dream about some people coming with a big tent and she knew when they did come she had to go to the tent.

When the tent was put up, there was much speculation as to what it was all about, some felt that it was for the workers who would be repairing the drains, others felt that it was just a bioscope, but ouma M. knew it was for her.

During their sore financial straits, it was she who fed the workers with buckets of sour porridge.

In 1950 the tent was pitched in Moroka again - and this time it was burned to the ground.

The April 1950 issue of Dorothea News reports: *"Johannesburg Riots - Love Conquers."*

The recent riots in Johannesburg were a tragedy.

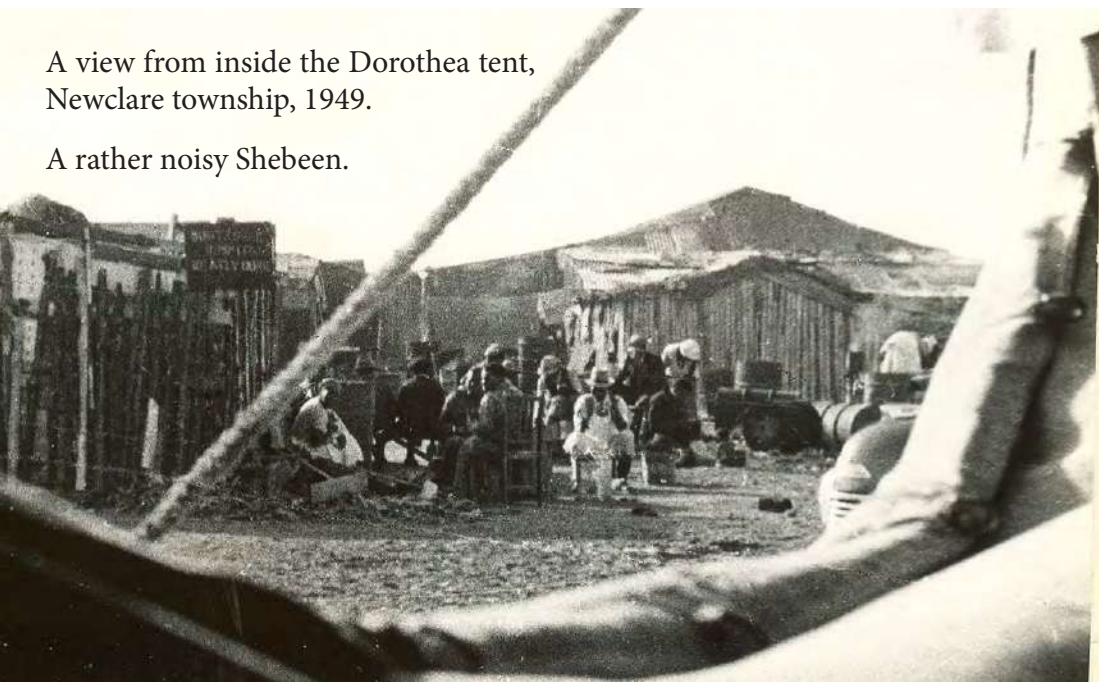
Also the Dorothea Mission suffered loss from the spirit of lawlessness, for one night our large tent was burnt down. In a matter of minutes it was in ashes a total loss! The evangelists were sleeping in the tent, and thank God, their lives were spared. Men in the vicinity who saw the danger of the evangelists, rushed to their assistance - they and their possessions were saved.

And in the loss God once again was good, unspeakably good. The evangelists were now without shelter. But immediately offers came from kind native men and women to give them beds and food.

To this day we do not know who burnt down the tent. But our workers made it their special aim to befriend the many young men. It was not easy at first, for many of these did not love us, nor like our presence in their midst, as is indicated by the fact that the tent was burnt. But love conquers, and our hearts truly rejoice that some who would not come near at first, have been won by the love of Christ in the hearts of the workers manifested towards them. The spirit in which the workers (European and Bantu) took the loss of the tent, must have made a deep impression on them. It was the Spirit of Christ."

A view from inside the Dorothea tent,
Newclare township, 1949.

A rather noisy Shebeen.



In 1951 the tent was pitched in Alexandra, and once again the workers had reason to be aware of God's Goodness; in the May 1951 issue of Dorothea News the following report appeared:

One of the Alexandra team tells of difficult circumstances:

"Last night I was very conscious during the meeting of the powers of the devil. The thought came to me whether the tent is pitched in the right place. Opposite the tent there is a club where drinking goes on, and where a gramophone loudly broadcasts its jazz music. In the house behind the tent there is dancing, not three yards from the tent. A boy sitting in the tent, beat time to the music with his feet so enthusiastically during our meeting, that a child that was sitting on his knees, fell to the ground. On the other side of the tent there is a drink smuggler, and his customers go in and out of the tent.

In spite of everything last night souls sought the Lord. Especially one young man looks very promising."

One such 'promising young man' from this period is evangelist (now Reverend) Shadrach Maloka. As a child he was heir to all of the sorrows of Soweto that we have outlined in earlier chapters; an illegitimate child, his mother gave him the name Mohanoe, 'the rejected one' because his father had spurned him and refused to accept any responsibility for him. This sense of rejection weighed heavily upon him. Inevitably he grew into a bitter and twisted young tsotsi, an illiterate youth whose whole life consisted of drink, dagga, immorality, crime and violence.

In December 1949 this young man heard of the big tent and the free films which were being shown by these strangers. With an angry curiosity in his heart he went along to Moroka to see what was going on. There somehow the love of God shining through these people captivated his lonely, sinful heart, and he yielded himself to Jesus Christ.

Soon afterwards he went for training at the Dorothea Bible School and became a powerful preacher who has been mightily used of God all over Southern Africa and even in Europe. He recently accepted a call to pastor a large church in GaRankuwa near to Pretoria.

A grey-haired matron, whose husband used to be a minister in one of the 'mainline denominations' tells of her conversion in 1952:

"It was very dark in those days in Moroka. Those of us who lived in Amasakhe learned many things. There were not churches in those days, not true Churches. We did belong to a church, but we were far from the Lord. We learned to make strong drink. We learned to serve the spirits of our ancestors. Yes, the devil



taught us many things. I came from another place first of all, but it was in Moroka that I learned all these terrible things.

We went to church on Sundays, and after the church we had Stokvas, parties with strong drink. Bad things were sometimes done there.

But the Lord was very good to us in 1952 when we got converted. Everything changed in my home and in my heart. I had to go and tell my madams, the people that I had worked for that I had taken things from them and ask them for forgiveness. The madams were all very much surprised that I, a minister's wife had stolen from them and that now I was coming to tell them after all these years. It was a wonderful time to tell them of the Lord."

Her husband states,

"When my wife became converted and began talking about this tent and these people and the meetings, I replied that it was just a group who were looking for members for their church and that I had no need to go there.

I was an important minister in my church. But the Lord did wonderful things for me. He worked in my heart. I was restless and unhappy, I had no peace in my heart. I had also a great struggle about my pipe and also about the strong drink. At the parties after church on Sundays I was always asked to serve the beer because I was the minister.

One day I was on my way home after the party and some children laughed at me because they saw that I was drunk. I was very angry with them, and said that they should not laugh at me because I am the minister.

It was then that I listened to my wife and I went to the tent and I heard the Gospel for the first time. I went forward to pray and to receive the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. After this my life it was much better and I thank the Lord."

And these are not isolated cases, I have been privileged to talk to many blacks who have met with Jesus Christ with life-transforming results; I have also been able to speak to ministers and leaders of evangelical churches and organisations that have been faithfully working for the salvation of men and women over the years and have heard similar accounts, of men and women and boys and girls from all levels of society in the townships coming to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

"We were always a rather small church, not many people came to our services because they said that we were too narrow and old-fashioned. Those who liked politics used to call me a sell-out and say that I was just preaching the white man's religion. But my wife and I kept on praying, and I kept on preaching the Gospel as it is in the Bible.



Morning and evening in Alexandra township, 1950.

The bus queues were over a mile long in the mornings and provided wonderful opportunities for personal work.



Slowly people got converted and began to come to church. But it was at about the time of the riots - whether that had anything to do with it I cannot say, but about then a number of young people, a few of them tsotsis, became converted. It made such a difference in them that their friends saw it and began coming as well. And since then the church has been going ahead."

It is not always easy to get accurate information about developments in Soweto since the Troubles. One hears at second hand of wonderful growth in particular churches, and then finds that both ministers and members are afraid to speak out, for publicity could mean trouble for them.

"Others have already been threatened that they will burn down their houses or their church if they say too much or if they seem to be 'collaborating' with the whites in any way."

And who are "they?" The radicals and the Black Power supporters.

But as one talks and listens to various Sowetans the evidence continues to mount that God is doing great things in these days. We have mentioned the testimony of one young tsotsi (and there are many other men and women who have been delivered from that kind of life by the power of God in Jesus Christ), as well as of their more 'respectable' neighbours. But what of those who have become caught up in some or other political activity, and for various reasons have developed a fierce hatred for whites?

Rev. N. was the son of a manse and was brought up in a mission school. In his teens he came under the influence of the ANC movement, and began to develop a fierce and fiery hatred of anything to do with the whites.

He came to despise his own parents because he felt that they were too subservient to the whites. He advanced in his secret political career and was on the point of volunteering for training as a subversive agent when the Lord laid hold of him. For no apparent reason he went to an evangelistic tent meeting in another township on the east rand. For the first time in his life he really heard the Gospel and responded... His whole life was completely changed.

He confesses that his attitude towards white people did not change overnight, but - and he emphasises this point, *"As the implications of the Gospel became clear to me, I saw that I could not really love God and hate my white neighbour."*

Through prayer, and in *"the power of the love of God"* he has overcome his resentments and feelings of rejection and inferiority.

He has an effective ministry to black and white people alike today.

Typical 'congregation' at a tent-meeting during the 50's.



J.K. was a man who had such a terrible resentment against whites that he could not even walk past a car owned by a white man without having a terrible urge to take up a stone and to do damage. On one occasion one of the white workers of the Dorothea Mission went to visit this man's wife. She found him at home as well as another man. Apparently they were both members of the African National Congress, which at that time had not yet been banned.

As this white woman entered the house, they both leaped to their feet with the ANC salute. She tried to talk to them of *Jesus*, but was rebuffed with slogans about the white man's God. As she left, they again gave their salute with the words, "*Mabuye e Africa.*" She went out, but felt that she could not allow them to have the last word.

So she went back to the house and said to them, "*You say Africa for the Africans, but I say Africa for Christ!*"

Through this man's wife's witness and prayers he finally became a Christian. Today he is a minister of the Gospel, and speaks of his anger and bitterness of those days with tears on his cheeks.

I went out of my way to talk to a group of young men in their late teens and early twenties who have recently become Christians if they had had any hangups about whites. Out of ten young men only two had had no problems; the one had been brought up on a farm where he had always played with the farmer's children, and had been positively staggered to find out that how different things were in the big city. He said that he had met with many slights and insults in the city that he had never known before, but that he had found Christ before it could make him bitter. "*Now Christ's love helps me to forgive!*"

The other young fellow who had had no problem had been a 'really bad chap', he said that he had been so busy 'living it up' that he had not had time to hate the whites at all; all his life he had been involved in a running battle of wits with the police which he had enjoyed without hating them, even as a rogue he must have been a very likeable fellow.

The others had had varying degrees of resentment; one young man had almost been shot in a hunting 'accident' as a child, and this had scarred his personality - "*But Jesus has made me whole and has taught me even to love the man who nearly shot me as a joke!*"

The others had had various experiences, mostly with pass laws and the like, and confessed to having real problems in their relationships towards white people. All, however have found the same thing, that Christ is able to deliver even from this bondage of racial hatred.



This is one aspect of the great work which God is doing in Soweto and in other places in Southern Africa today, a mighty work of His Spirit in the hearts of men and women who have been reconciled to Himself through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Breaking down the barriers of resentment and prejudice to draw men and women together in real harmony.



And it is happening on both sides of the colour line.

Several devout mothers of Soweto spoke of the effects of a certain white official's conversion. Apparently he had been working in Soweto for quite a few years before he came to know the Lord, and many Sowetans have noticed and commented on the remarkable change in his attitude towards them. "*Now he treats us as people!*" they say.

In recent years it has become fashionable for various church bodies to try in various ways to urge their members to meet in various ways with members of black congregations in the same denomination. Many well-meaning people have tried to do this in various ways with varying degrees of success; all too often, though it just doesn't seem to work. There is an awkwardness and an uncertainty that makes people ill at ease.

Over against this, I have had the privilege in recent years in attending Services of Worship and meetings where blacks and whites had come together for the sole purpose of glorifying and talking about Jesus Christ - and it was difficult to get people to go home, for there was a real bond of fellowship in their common love for Jesus Christ that everyone had responded to - and the word "*race*" was just not thought of.

To talk to these ebony-skinned believers is a humbling experience, for they have a deep and simple faith, an implicit trust and desire to serve and to obey this Jesus Christ who has brought them out of darkness into light.

It does not take long to realise that they know nothing of the 'soft' conversions which have become fashionable in so many of our white churches today, conversions which have no tears of repentance and which scarcely cause a ripple in the 'convert's' life-style.

These dear people take the Word of God very seriously, and there is a radical and definite change in their lives when they become Christians. The permissive and compromising type of life which unfortunately seems to characterise so many white Christians today is foreign to these people who have come out of the darkness of sin and shame into the glorious light of God's love.

The theme song of these converts seems to be the negro spiritual, "*The things I used to do, I do them no more*"; there is an immediate and definite break with smoking, drinking, gambling and immorality, no doubt some people would dismiss such an approach to Christianity as 'narrow and old-fashioned', but it is certainly Scriptural!



It is astonishing to learn that when young people get converted, they immediately renounce all and any intimate relationships with members of the opposite sex until such time as they decide to get married. Why is this? Simply because immorality and fornication are so common in the black community, to have a boy or girl friend is to have one object in mind, and Christians feel that they would rather avoid even the appearance of evil.

Nor does this seem to be a matter of rules and regulations - it is simply the quality of life in those churches which preach Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

And the result is that the members of the Congregation enjoy real Christian fellowship with each other without shadows being cast.

Another aspect of the remarkable change which takes place in the lives of these converts is that almost without exception they testify to a tremendous urge to make restitution for things which they have stolen. Quite a few white employers have been dumbfounded when an employee (sometimes from years before), whom they had trusted implicitly, comes to tell of theft and misdemeanour's while in that person's employment and to ask forgiveness and to be allowed to repay. Invariably, of course, there is wholehearted forgiveness and searching questions as to how this remarkable change of heart came about.

One convert tells of how his former employer, a Jewish owner of a large hardware store in Johannesburg called all of his employees, both black and white together and asked him to tell them about this Jesus who had made such a difference to him that he had come to report various small thefts that he had committed.

In another instance, the convert's ex-boss was so surprised to hear that someone had been able to break his security system (which he had thought to be foolproof), that he immediately offered this now - repentant thief a very good job as a security officer.' Naturally, there is always a dramatic change in the working lives of blacks who have responded to the Good News.

For example S. began holding early morning prayers with some of the other black workers at the factory.

Before long, the white supervisors began to notice a remarkable change in work and attitudes...

His testimony made such an impression on at least one of the white workers that she started going to church more regularly and became converted herself!

More, when the Security Police carried out an investigation into attitudes and relationships among the workers in factories in this area, they seemed to find it difficult to believe that there were no problems in this particular firm - They had found tensions and problems in nearly all of the other factories!

It is only the power of God that can bring about changes like that, meaningful changes in individual lives and constructive changes in relationships between people, changes in which all of the old standards and patterns of living are utterly changed, and a whole new way of thinking and living is seen.

It is only the power of God working in the hearts of men and women that can bring about any real and effective kind of change in Soweto and throughout Southern Africa...

Take for example the experience of Pastor S. He is a part-time minister.

His paid job is that of policeman. He is in fact a station commander.

The church that he serves in this part-time ministry managed to get a church site. But this has proved to be too small for them. There are so many young people - *yes, school children!* coming to the services that they will have to build a larger church than they had originally planned.

And most surprising of all, many of these teenagers are from the high school at Naledi. One of the places where the troubles began in 1976.



Wonderful things are taking place in the lives of these teenagers. One mother reported that her daughter had become a Christian, and the next day she found her busy burning some of her nicest clothes. Asked why she was doing this, she replied, *"Oh, I can't wear them any more - they are all 'back door clothes!'"* (I.e. stolen goods).

Make no mistake, though, these young converts are still very critical about many things in this country, but by the grace of God, the anger and resentment which sparked off the riots has given way to a willingness to talk and negotiate, and an ability to love the whites which was not there before.

Looking at the matter on the lowest and most selfish level, the level of simple survival, this is a most significant development. The alternative lies in the words of a particularly bitter young man, *"I must fight for my freedom with any weapons that I can get. If words are not good enough then I must use guns and bombs, and no-one has the right to judge me or question me for what I do!"*

But God is doing wonderful things in the lives of these young people who are so terribly caught up in the turbulence of these days. We should realise that black teenagers are subject to tensions and pressures that white youths know nothing about. Not only is there the pressure to conform to the modern patterns of the blue denim generation and the permissive pop culture of our day, but there are the enormous political pressures which are trying to shape the thinking of a whole generation. Black consciousness is a very real issue to these kids, and woe betide the "sellout" who does not go along with this kind of thinking and do all in his or her power to advance the cause of black nationalism.

And yet there are young Christians who are willing to stand up and be counted as disciples of this Jesus Christ who has been scorned and vilified as *"the white man's God"*.

One young lady was recognised as being a good speaker and was asked to address a gathering of school children.

She said that she would do so on one condition, namely that she be allowed to talk to them about Jesus Christ. The others were astonished.

"But you are with us in the streets!" they said.

"Yes," she replied, *"I can share with you in some of your ambitions, but I do not agree that violence is the way of solving things. To me, Jesus is the only answer."*

To most people, the riots which broke out in Soweto were a real tragedy. Many lives were lost and many people were hurt - some of whom will be crippled for life. As I have spoken to various people about the whole situation and especially the disturbances of June 1976 and since then, and have tried to build up a picture of the whole thing I have found that most people can tell you pretty quickly what the students did, and what the police did, and what the tsotsis did and what the Zulus did, but when one asks them, "And what did God do?" there is a moment of stunned silence, and then the awed realisation that God has indeed been at work in the whole situation, in and through and in spite of the troubles.

After the battle...

Policemen display weapons and petrol-bombs confiscated from rioters in June 1976.



The riots broke out on a Wednesday, the day that the workers of the Dorothea Mission in Soweto have their weekly prayer meeting... In all of the terror and confusion of that day there was a gallant little band of women who resolutely made their way to the appointed place at the usual time to meet with the Lord and to pray with a new urgency for the people of their beloved Soweto.

Mama D. describes the events of the day,

"It was on a Wednesday. Wednesday the 16th of June last year when we were going to our weekly prayer meeting. I was going with my sister, and while we were going to take a bus to where we were going, we met the children running away from other children and from the police.

First of all we didn't take any notice of the children, we thought they were just doing their own thing, and so we went on. But at last we find there really is a big fight, and we have to turn back and run away too.

The way we ran there - I don't forget that day. I ran like a young girl, but then I experience it now, it was the Lord picked me up in that way because my legs they are really finished, but I praise the Lord.

And another thing, it came to us after all, it's not to run back home, but we ran to go to the place where we were going to have the meeting, and we went there. And the children - in my life I never see such a lot of children.

They were doing all this in their way, fighting everybody, throwing stones to the cars and all this.

We went to this mother's place where we were going to, but when we were coming there, everyone who was there thought of Miss C. (Dorothea's leading white worker for Soweto; she had been warned by others as she entered Soweto on that day, and so had returned home in safety).

To me, when I think of that day it wasn't a good day. Well, we had the meeting there; none of us felt too good, but we prayed, oh we prayed so much for these poor people of Soweto, that Jesus would come and help them.

We prayed and the time came that we were finished to go back home. While we were there we had the fires burning at Morris Isaacson. It was the next office to Morris Isaacson and it was a terrible thing. We went to get the bus, and I couldn't get the transport to go home. We heard after that they had burned some of the buses and so they had stopped the buses. At last I got a taxi and it just took me half way and everything was burning there.

And there were children, young children, and they were going to the bottle stores, taking bottles away and breaking and all things like this. I thought that it was enough. While I was getting there with the taxi there was a little van with meat, cold meat to supply the shops, and they came there and pulled the man out and they gave him a hiding and they took everything out and then set the van on fire.



A new receptiveness to the message.

I went home, not very far from the office where we pay rent, it was in flames. The pass office was burned, the Orlando office was on fire - just the whole of Soweto seemed to be in flames. It made me think of what hell must be like.

It is not easy to think of it, and the worst thing to think of it is that it is our children that is doing these things. This is why I always say, People please pray for Soweto, because I don't think it is finished, because it is still some other things, some terrible and bad things that are coming there."

These dear mothers of Soweto who met to pray on that day, and the many others who have been praying since then, have seen and experienced God's blessing in many ways. They report that in the months before the disturbances they had experienced a growing resistance to their witnessing and giving out tracts. More and more of the people had refused to allow them into their homes.

But since the disturbances it has been a different story, they have been invited into many homes, and have found eager listeners among the bewildered parents of Soweto whose children have suddenly become strangers.

We must not under emphasise the seriousness of the tensions which there are in our country these days, and the very real problems that confront us. Nor must we imagine that all we need to do to overcome these problems and tensions is to invoke the power of God. Not at all, what we are saying is that it is only through the grace of God that we can find a basis for peace.

The following report from the November 1976 issue of the Dorothea News will illustrate this: During August 1976 it was our privilege to hold a short campaign at a certain college to which we had been invited.

Our team comprised one black and two white men. We knew beforehand that it would be a campaign held under difficult circumstances, for this college had been closed earlier owing to riots.

We started our meetings on a Tuesday evening. It was rather quiet then as the school principal was present, but we could sense the tension.

The following evening we were alone with the students. At the end of that meeting they insisted on asking questions. One young man came to the front and made quite a few political accusations. Then he turned round and walked out. By this time there was much agitation among the students. Many were shouting and making a terrible noise.



The third evening we were ready for anything! From the beginning the students sang the Gospel songs in a way that betrayed mockery. When one of us brought the message it was accompanied by a stream of scornful remarks. Suddenly the lights went out. In a moment everything was in confusion. All we could do was to sit or stand stock-still in the darkness. We expected a blow on our heads at any time. How wonderful it was to know right then that the Lord Jesus is always with us.

After a few minutes the lights went on again. Order was restored and we continued the Gospel message. At the end of the meeting some of the students surrounded our black evangelist at the car. They said: *"You stay behind! Now we want to speak to you! What are you doing in the company of the whites?"*

The following morning we prayed and consulted together concerning our next step. The disturbances during our meetings were such that there was little prospect for spiritual blessing. We then decided to discontinue our programme for the time being and to wait on God for further guidance.

From day to day we prayed that the Lord would change the situation. The devil seemingly had won the first round, but this was not the end of the battle! Our chance came on Sunday afternoon.

Two of us drove to the nearby shopping centre in order to give out tracts at the bus- terminus. On our way we met the leaders of the students, and we extended to them the hand of friendship by offering them a lift. They were amazed. The one looked at the other, but the Lord touched their hearts. They agreed to accept the lift. We talked about different matters and took them to their destination. This was the first crack in the wall of opposition!

The following Tuesday morning the three of us met as usual for Bible study and prayer. The time had come to decide about our further evangelistic activities among the students. The Lord's answer to our prayers was to fill our hearts with His love - that incomprehensible love which prompted the Son of God to leave His Throne in order to die for a world that hated Him.

The Lord opened our eyes to see the evil one behind the behaviour of these young men, for the apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, ***"Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*** There was only one answer in our hearts: *"Lord, we love these people with your love! We do not want the devil to gain a victory over them."*

During the lunch-hour I spoke to them with the permission of their house-father. I asked them to give us just one more chance to tell them what the Lord had laid on our hearts for them - but this time without disturbances! I saw a few heads nodding in approval.

At the end of the evening meal I sat down at one of the tables. One by one they came to join us. After a while more than half of the students had gathered. I spoke about the Lord Jesus. I told them how the Jews had rejected Him and what terrible consequences this had had for the Jewish nation. Then I opened a subject which, I knew, was on the minds of all. "*You say: 'God does not love us because He allows us to be suppressed'*" I spoke about the sin of the blacks and the sin of the whites, trying to show them how all of us are guilty before the Holy God. That evening was marked by a great calm. All were thinking deeply. We parted quietly.



A remarkable scene:

After a Sangoma had become converted in a campaign in one of the townships, he brought all of the 'tools' of his dark trade, the bones and the fetishes and the herbs and burned them publicly.

With their consent we had a further meeting the next evening. The attendance was very good and we could sense a change among the students. The following evening saw our closing meeting, because we had to proceed to another place. While I told the students how the Lord Jesus had saved me, the lights went out once again. This time, however, everybody was quiet and listened attentively. Afterwards another team member brought the message. We held up a torch to give some light. When the lights were turned on again everybody was still completely quiet, and we could see an intense interest on many faces.

At the end of this meeting some came to ask questions - this time questions full of meaning: "*What must I do to be born again?*"

Yes, God is at work in Southern Africa in these difficult times but there are other forces at work as well, and it is evident that the evil one is bent on making life as difficult as possible for those who love the Lord - there is very real opposition to the Gospel, and even persecution against those who try to live the Christian life.

Those who cling to the age-old superstitions of their tribal forefathers, or who follow the newer forms of animism and ancestor-worship which are embodied in so many of the sects and among the 'Sipiri' attack the Christians with the assertion that the troubles of Africa have come because the people left the old ways and now the spirits of the ancestors are angry.



The politically motivated brand Christians as “sellouts” who have been duped by the white man and his Bible. *“This Jesus is the white people’s God. He will not help us, but will only keep us in chains...”*

Too many of the militants have swallowed the Marxist lie that religion is the opium of the people. There is reason to believe that there are even those who delight in persecuting and harming and even killing Christians for the evil pleasure of doing so. The very lives of these believers are an indictment of their own.



At the beginning of this chapter I made the statement that we have reason to believe that God has intervened dramatically on occasion to prevent unrest in the camps and locations from flaring up into serious trouble... This may well be challenged by the sceptical, but when we look at certain events in the history of our country we must either dismiss them as pure chance, or give God the glory.

The early 60's were a difficult and dangerous time in the townships of Johannesburg, the reef and also in Vereeniging and Van Der Bijl Park. It was in 1960 that the tragedy of Sharpeville took place. That was not an isolated incident but was part of a general period of unrest right through the country.

There had been considerable unrest and dissatisfaction in regard to the clearing and resettling of areas like Sophiatown and Newclare during the 50's; tribal warfare had flared up repeatedly, especially as a result of the activities of the 'AmaRussians', a wild gang which consisted largely of Sotho-speaking blacks which terrorised the townships for many years after the war.

Political unrest gathered momentum; there were boycotts of the bus services when the fares were increased and militant demands for higher wages. Officials remember the slogan that was painted on roads and walls, "*Pound a day, stay at home!*" and the gangs that roamed about trying to prevent people from going to work.

One day, early in 1960, Mr. Von Staden of the Dorothea Mission received a warning that it would be dangerous to hold meetings in any of the townships at that time. Police and soldiers had already taken up positions along the ridges overlooking the townships. Very serious trouble was brewing.

"On the Sunday afternoon I spent some time with one of the township officials who told me just how serious the situation was. In the late afternoon I was on my way home, when I noticed how much damage a terrible hail storm had done to trees along the road to Pretoria. Branches had been broken off as if cut with a pair of scissors. The sky was dark and ominous, with awful, jagged clouds - I have never seen a cloud formation like that before or since that day.

At nine-o'clock that evening I recieved a telephone call to say that there had been a terrible windstorm, a tornado, in Albertynsville and many people had been injured or killed.

The next day my dear wife and I went through to see what we could do.

It was a scene of utter devastation; in the area south of the old Johannesburg Potchefstroom road a square mile of shanties and houses had been flattened. People and houses and cars and animals had been literally sucked up into the air and dropped into the ruin on the ground.

There was only one house still standing, the home of an old blind man, about ninety years of age. We watched as helpers - many of them the policemen and soldiers who had been waiting for trouble up on the ridges - carried away the dead and the injured.

Most of the survivors were utterly stunned by the terrible experience. Many of them said in awed voices that this was an act of the great God. Needless to say, the planned unrest never took place in the Johannesburg townships."

The result of a 'human tornado.'
WRAB offices at Klipspruit after June 1976.



But there were still agitators at work, and unrest was simmering in other townships, notably on the east rand.

Oom Hans goes on,

“Several months after the tornado at Soweto I had to travel home to Pretoria fairly late one evening. There had been a bad storm in Johannesburg, and I was travelling quite slowly.

Suddenly I came upon a huge tree lying across the road. It did not entirely span the roadway, and so I was able to manoeuvre around it - only to find another tree in my path, lying the opposite way!

It took me a good while to navigate this obstacle course, for there were no less than 120 huge trees which had been uprooted and hurled across the roadway.

You can imagine my astonishment when I learned the next day that this had been the work of another tornado, and that this storm had struck the Johannesburg - Pretoria road at Halfway House where I had encountered the trees, and had then ‘bounced’ up, to strike again in one of the black townships on the east rand.

Naturally, the trouble which had been brewing in that area was effectively stopped. Tragically, it did not quench the spirit of unrest in the Vaal Triangle, and the terrible events of Sharpeville resulted.

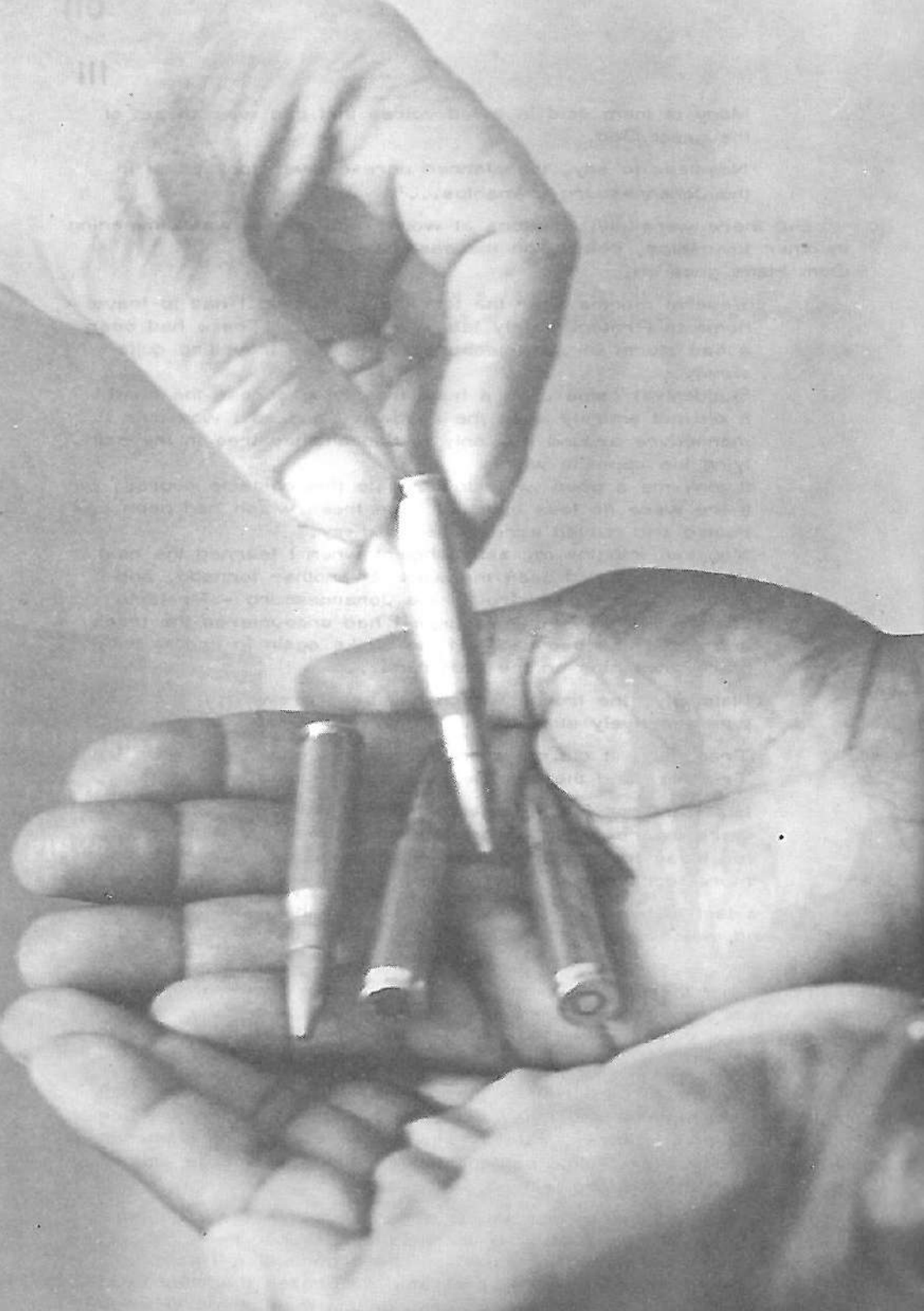
But I am convinced (together with many of the officials who were aware of what was happening) that if it had not been for these freak storms, we would have had something much more terrible than Sharpeville.”

It is a fact of history that there has been nothing like that spirit of unrest and violence in the urban black areas of the Republic until June 1976.

However, there were other things which took place in the early 60's which some would dismiss as “*chance*”, but which many people believe show evidence of God taking a hand in the affairs of our country.

From about the beginning of 1962 there were quite a few widely scattered incidents of sabotage; power pylons were blown up, bombs planted in various places, railway ties loosened... For eighteen months the Security Police battled to deal with the scourge and to lay hands on the leaders without success.

Highly trained agents had set up a very effective organisation made up of small cells; many of the smaller fish had been caught, but the leaders could not be traced. The organisation (made up of ANC and Communist officials) became so brazen that they even began to broadcast sporadic messages, calling themselves “*Radio Liberation*.”



And then, early in July 1963 a man appeared out of the blue to provide the vital information that was to lead to the more-exciting- than-fiction raid on the Liliesleaf Farm at Rivonia in Johannesburg, and the arrest of the much-wanted leaders of the movement which had been plotting the violent overthrow of the South African government.

But there have been many other remarkable things since then...

Some farm labourers ask permission to bury a member of their family "*who was killed by a car in Johannesburg*" on the farm. The farmer gives permission readily enough.

But on the day of the burial, he has a strange urge.

He calls in a neighbour and puts his revolver in his pocket.

Then he goes to the 'funeral' service and asks that the coffin be opened. The protests are quickly squashed and the coffin opened.

It is full of machine guns and hand grenades from China.

A railway policeman gets a "*feeling*" about three men who have just bought tickets to Johannesburg from a town in the western Transvaal.

He asks them to open their luggage. They try to run, and he arrests them.

In each of their bags are the pieces of a Russian-made machine gun and some hand grenades.

Three armed men get into Johannesburg.

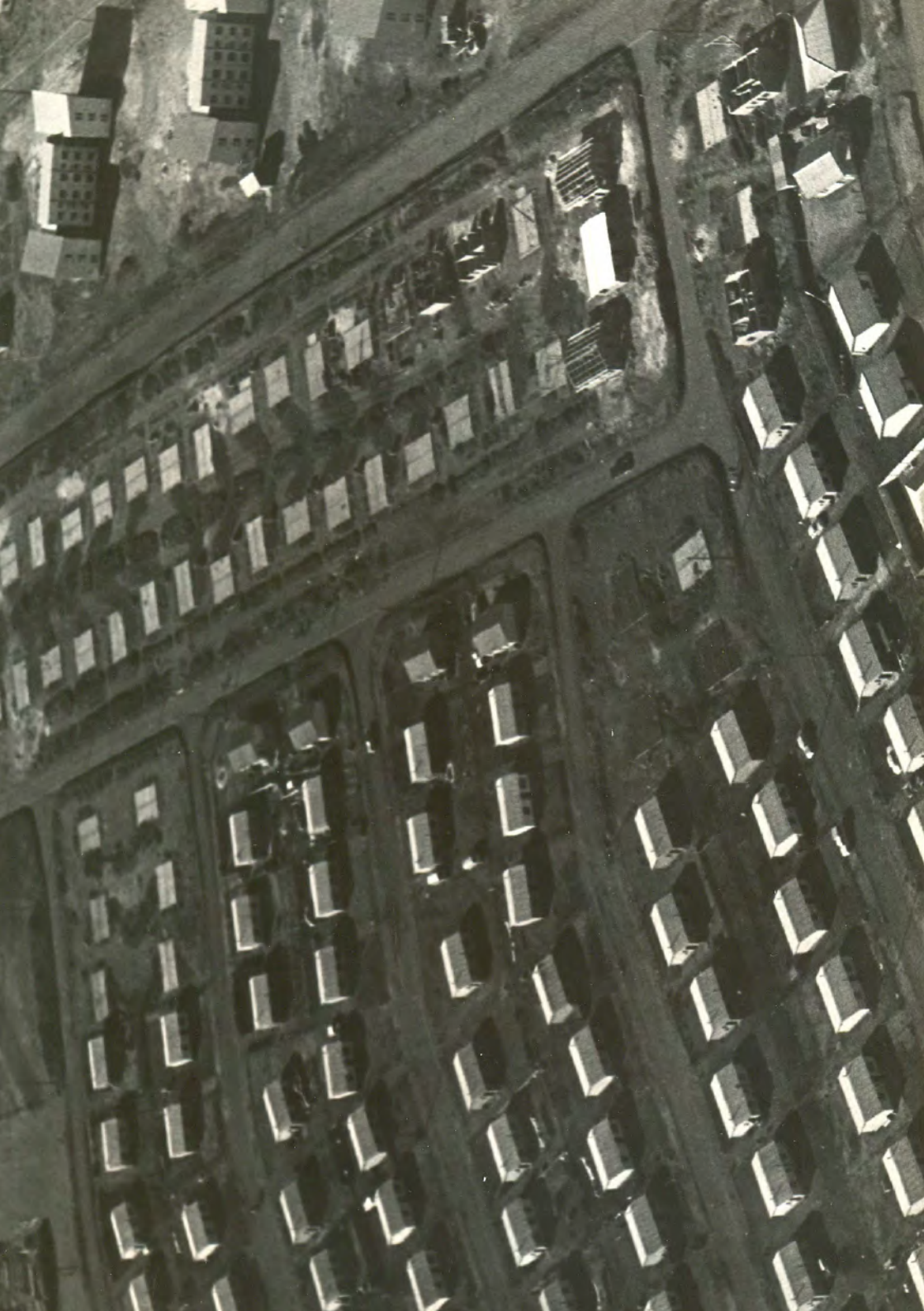
They are to cause as much trouble as they can.

But their escapade ends in a factory in the back streets.

And instead of hundreds, they manage to kill one and wound three men.

Coincidences? Poor training? Maybe, but I don't think so. I believe that these are instances of God's hand at work. He still has a purpose for this country and its peoples.

Because **SOMEBODY** is praying...



Ladies and Gentlemen, there is Soweto.

The underdeveloped, overpopulated, strategic city. The city which, like Topsy the little black girl of literary fame, “*jest growed*”. The city which we cannot ignore.

- We’ve seen a fair amount of it in our lighting tour.
- We’ve seen the neat little matchbox houses which replaced the awful shanties in the black spots of yesteryear.
- We’ve seen the green fields between the various townships, and the little streams trickling along the valleys, and the animals grazing which will be slaughtered for funerals and religious ceremonies.
- We’ve seen the Oppenheimer Tower and the little park and the cluster of huts and shrines where Credo Mutwa trains witchdoctors and regales visitors with tales of his people and their customs.
- We’ve seen the burnt-out shells of cars and buildings, grim reminders of the violence of the riots, and of the unrest which still simmers.
- We’ve seen a glimpse of the city’s development and of its problems. The tremendous social needs of the place. The serious and urgent political problems and tensions. The underlying Spiritual Problem.
- D’you remember the lawless, feared tsotsis? The illegitimate children? The drunks and the gamblers? The countless men and women enslaved to sin?
- D’you remember the witchdoctors? The sangomas in their picturesque dress? or their western disguise? The Sipiri mamas with their white ‘doeks’?

We were surprised at the growth of primitive religions in the townships, we had thought that they were dying out as the people became more westernised and Christianised.

Our spines tingled as we realised that demonism is rampant again. Oh yes, the churches more of them than you can count, it seemed but what a sad mixture of beliefs!

And how thrilling to hear about what God is doing in Soweto. The wonderful conversions!



We smile politely at the courier; it has all been very interesting, but the tour is almost over and soon we can get back to our comfortable homes and our complacent routine of life; back to the easy chair and the newspaper and the TV. The show "*Rich man, Poor man*" is on tonight.

Very interesting about Soweto, of course, but - so what?

So what that unrest rumbles in the back streets of the townships.

So what that a handful of militant youths can terrorize and intimidate a million people into silence and reluctant co-operation.

So what that sin and evil runs rampant in the lives of countless men and women who are enslaved to drink and gambling and immorality.

So what that the forces of Communism and Antichrist have laid claim to Soweto and its peoples, intending to use it as a beachhead to conquer South Africa and the world.

So What?

No, dear reader, you cannot sit back comfortably again after reading this book, for whether you like it or not, you are involved in the greatest struggle in the history of mankind. No one can remain neutral as the devil makes his final bid for world domination.

Make no mistake about it, the forces of Antichrist are on the attack. The focal point of the battle is Soweto. And each one of us is directly involved.

You are either a part of the Problem or part of the Solution!

Let us be quite clear in our minds that we are engaged in a desperate spiritual battle. One of the enemy's best moves has been to convince people - even sincere Christians - that what is taking place in the world today is simply social and political, 'the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the world for liberation.' With this ploy he has been able to outmanoeuvre countless well-meaning people, and by the use of emotional slogans has persuaded them to throw in their weight with all sorts of organisations and activities which have directly or indirectly advanced the day when Satan's minions will rule the world in his name.

In these confusing days we find to our astonishment that many sincere Christians are being deceived and are giving support to some very strange causes and activities, after all, oppression is most unchristian and we must help people to become liberated without asking what they are being 'liberated' to.



If this doesn't work, then believers must be persuaded to waste their time and energies with trivial things; fighting minor skirmishes amongst themselves, or busy with arid theological debates and futile committee work - doing anything which is not concerned with the real battle. Far too many are sidetracked in various ways. One of the easiest ways today, of course, is to get Christians busy with campaigning for human rights and better social conditions instead of getting out to turn the world upside down with the unchanging message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that it is wrong for Christians to be involved in social and political issues - it is imperative that we must live out all of the implications of the Gospel, but we must be aware of the cunning deceitfulness of the evil one.

We must be aware that there is a dangerous counterfeit of true Christianity which is abroad in the world today masquerading under the disguise of 'Christian social concern' in reality one of the subtlest and most successful of all of the devil's seductive snares.

It is a 'gospel' which looks and sounds remarkably like the real thing a 'gospel' which uses plenty of Scripture and is always challenging people to love their neighbour and to be involved in issues which will improve the lot of the less fortunate.

But it is a man-centred gospel which does not give the glory to God, nor does it present Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, the only solution to man's deepest needs. In the end this 'gospel' becomes a subtle way of persuading the world that man can and must solve his own problems. Sadly, many fine Christians have been taken in by this distortion of the Good News, and their lives have become worthless to the Kingdom of God.

"I was brought up in what you would call a conservative evangelical home. I even had a conversion experience in my teens. But as I got older and began to look at the problems of the world and the terrible social needs of so many people, and the political injustice and oppression, I began to question the rather naive faith of my childhood. I began to see that Christians must be more involved in the struggle against oppression and injustice on behalf of the poor, and that we should be less concerned with the spiritual and other-worldly things that Christians are usually preoccupied with. I came to see that we must re-interpret the message of the Bible for our day..."

"I was a real hot-gospeller in my teens. I was involved in all kinds of things like SCA and YFC. I got a real kick out of seeing other young people coming to Jesus. I would probably have gone on like that, but one day someone gave me a book by Dr. (a prominent advocate of the Social Gospel in America). When I read this I began to think, what was I doing for the needs of the poor and the needy? I looked around and soon found that there were people in other churches who were really involved in social and political issues. I began to go along with them, it was sort of strange at first, I hadn't had much to do with blacks before that. Gradually I dropped out of all the other things that I had been involved with. I began to see the Bible in a new way, and I just didn't fit in with the old crowd any more."

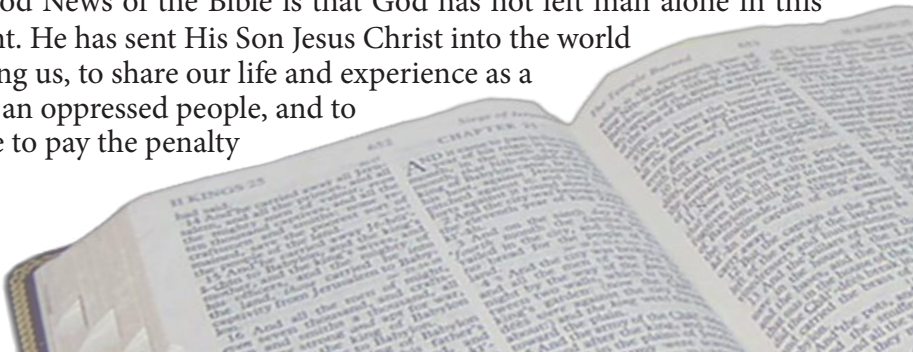
We all know instances of leading Christians who have somehow been swallowed up by this thing, and whereas they once had outstanding testimonies and tremendous power in their service for God, they have fallen to the level of religious politicians, and their lives show no trace of that former spiritual greatness.

It can happen so easily. That a Christian can become so taken up in such social and political activities - good and necessary things - that they begin to neglect their spiritual exercises and their relationship with the Lord grows cold. They begin to backslide. And in the end they are questioning the authority of the Word of God and have forgotten the power of God's Spirit to change human hearts and human affairs.

It is for this reason that we dare not move away from the basic teachings of the Bible as we look at Soweto and its Problem for if we do not analyse the situation in terms of Scriptural truth, we will come to the wrong conclusions and will apply the wrong solutions to the problem.

And Satan will win the battle! We must begin from the basic Biblical assumption that all men are sinners, that we have offended against a Holy God and deserve His anger and His punishment that as a result of this, man is living in estrangement from God and in actual enmity against Him that is reflected in man's relationships with his fellow man and that man is lost and helpless in his sin.

But the Good News of the Bible is that God has not left man alone in this predicament. He has sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to live among us, to share our life and experience as a member of an oppressed people, and to give His life to pay the penalty of our sin.



God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. And in Jesus Christ the barriers between man and man have been broken down so that there may be peace and harmony between man and his God and with his fellow men.

But man is arrogant and adamant in his rebellion against God and does not easily admit that he is a sinner. He will not acknowledge that he has offended against God and his neighbour, nor humble himself to ask forgiveness.

It is only the gracious wooing of the Spirit of God that can bring a man or a woman to that point of conviction and surrender.

Even worse, the Bible shows us that the whole thing is enormously complicated by the fact that there are hostile spiritual powers, malignant evil forces which will do all that they can to prevent human beings from coming to repentance and faith.

We have to contend with the devil and all of his fallen angels:

- who are diabolically determined to prevent people from coming to love and to serve and to worship God.
- who are implacably set on man and his world.
- who are even now engaged in setting up the most evil and tyrannical system of world government that mankind has ever known.

Which is why we are not going to get anywhere in this crucial struggle by making a few concessions or even by saying a few pious prayers!

We have to understand and apply the basic principles which God has laid down for victory in this warfare. . .

principles which are summarised in a verse which has been quoted and misquoted more often than any other in our country in recent years, but which has not yet really been applied (except in the lives of a few individuals) in a meaningful way:-

*“If My people,
which are called by My Name,
shall humble themselves,
and pray,
and seek My Face,
and turn from their wicked ways;
then will I hear from Heaven,
and will forgive their sin
and heal their land.”*

II Chronicles 7:14

WORLD

5c

OUR OWN, OUR ONLY PAPER
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1976

CITY
LATE

Rioters in raid on Bara

BROWING
in
the
area
of
Bara
today
after
the
bar
was
closed
by
the
police.



More violence Soweto

MORE trouble erupted in Soweto today as rioters set the Zola Administrative office building and the police bus depot on fire. The police had been after 13 buses which had been reported set alight.

Several buses had also been stood leaving them with unobstructed windows. The bus view which was reconstructed this morning at 1.30.

The Naledi bottle store was set alight and looting this morning. The building of Government at least 17. At the corner of

Vinecent and Bidens Road, people were stopping motorists and ordering them to do "Black Power" in the situation in other townships. Several people generally

24 dead, 250 hurt

NOT DEATH TOLL SES

seek probe

Yesterday's bloody riot in Soweto has now become a study of the death and destruction which the riot complex.

Members of the South African Police, known as the Anti-Terrorism Unit, dressed in camouflage uniforms and carrying riot gear, were seen in Soweto. Roadblocks have been erected at all entrances to Soweto and no Whites are being allowed into the township.

Go helez

In recent years we have had several national days of prayer and repentance in South Africa. Churches and halls all over the country, in villages and cities, were filled to overflowing. Tears flowed and eloquent sermons were preached.

Everyone who took part felt deeply moved and humbled before God. And in His mercy, God heard the prayers that went up, and gave rain and great blessing. There was only one thing wrong.

It didn't last...

Within a few days everything was back to normal again, and there was little indication that these wonderful times of prayer and repentance and humiliation had had any lasting effect upon the life of our country as a whole.

We can hardly blame the sceptics who dismiss the whole thing as a lot of noise and bluster, a sort of religious extravaganza with little practical benefit.

But if we are honest, we have to admit that the results were disappointing for the simple reason that the conditions were not met.

When the disturbances erupted in Soweto, there were one or two calls from various quarters for another national day of prayer, but they did not seem to come with much fervour. Perhaps this was because only a few people seem to realise just how serious the events in Soweto really are, or it may have been because some people have realised that another formal religious exercise of this nature would be inadequate in the face of such a threat.

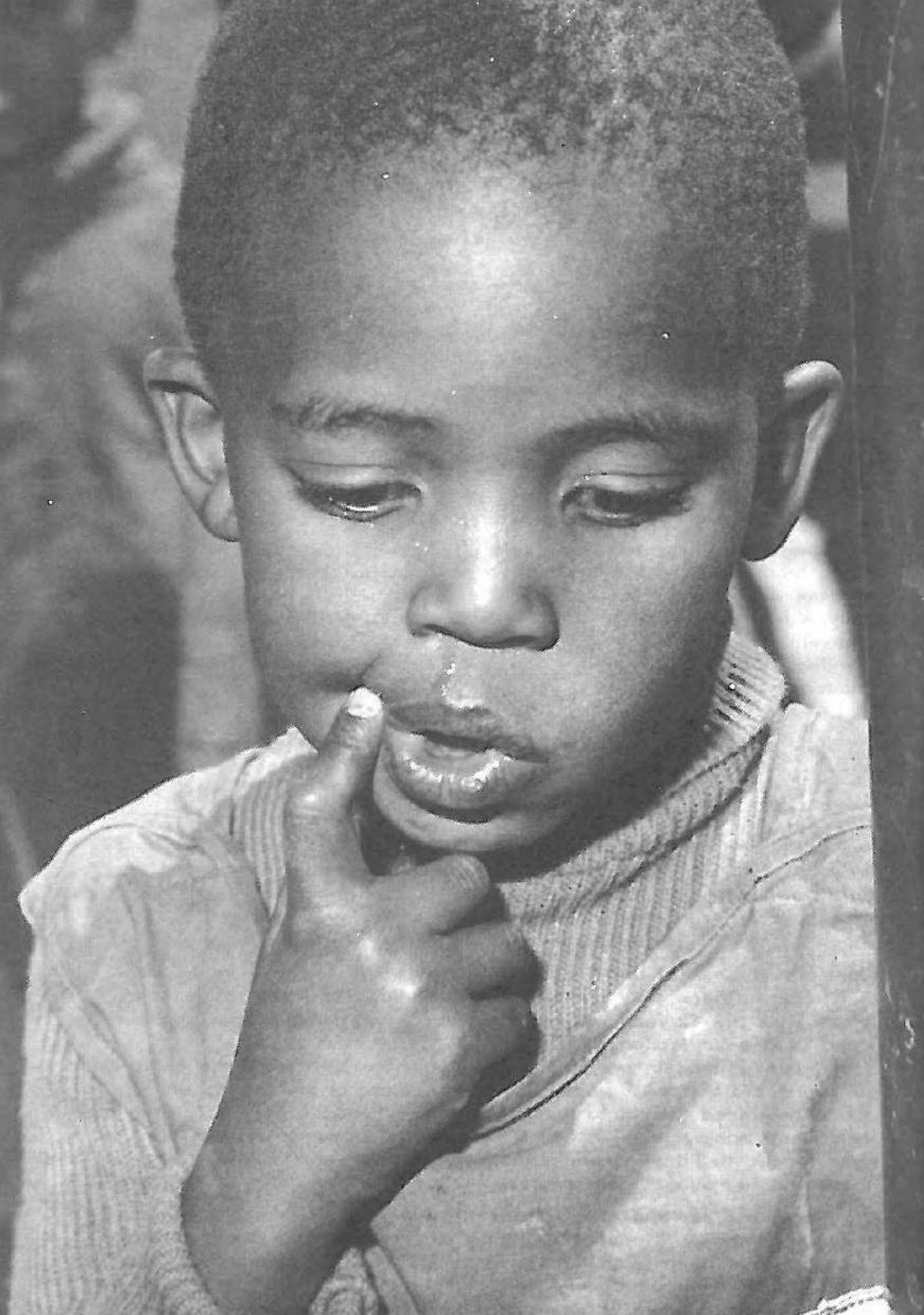
In the fearful light of the fires of Soweto we must realise that we desperately need our God to take a hand in the affairs of our country, and to help us to heal our land of its ills and its tensions.

But we must realise also that it is terribly easy for us to disqualify ourselves, to make it impossible for God to do anything for us.

We just have to go on as we are now, it's downhill all the way.

Just take a look at the history of Israel as we have it in the Old Testament; there you can see this fact illustrated with brutal clarity. Here was the Chosen nation, the People who had a special claim upon God's protection...

But again and again we read the solemn words, ***"And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of."*** Judges 6:1, 4:1, 13:1 etc.; again and again their sin and their unbelief became so bad that God was forced to lift His hand and to allow their enemies to overwhelm them and to ravage their country.



From the earliest days of our history, South Africa has had a noble tradition of Christian teaching and principles. Many of our leaders have been God fearing men, and we are grateful for the Bible-based laws which are written into our Constitution and for the guarantee of freedom of worship which we have.

But it is a false security to imagine that a few 'Christian' principles written into the Constitution and an abundance of formal worship will guarantee God's protection and our safety.

If we reject His word and will not obey His law, He must surely reject us as well. If we imagine for one moment that we can sort out Soweto and the problems of our country without His guidance and help, we are placing ourselves into the perilous position that He may allow us to try and to destroy ourselves in our trying. The Bible spells it out quite clearly in such passages as Deuteronomy chapter 28: ***"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God."***

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee..." Deuteronomy 28:1,2,15.

Of course, we must remember that injunctions, promises and warnings like this were always addressed to a rather exclusive group of people; there is a divine 'segregation' in the Bible. ***"..My people, which are called by My Name..."*** The primary reference is, of course, to the nation of Israel, the Covenant people of God. But when we look at that in the light of such sections as the above from Deuteronomy and the sort of thing that many of the prophets said, we realise that there is a clear indication that the disobedient and the unbelieving automatically exclude themselves from this select company and from God's grace.

In the New Testament this is made crystal clear; it is only those who are living in a relationship of faith and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ who may consider themselves to be God's people.



“as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His Name” John 1:12.

“He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father.” John 14:21.

“Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.” Matthew 7:21.

There were many people in Israel who imagined that they were perfectly safe and secure because they were descendants of Abraham and they did all the ‘right’ religious things - but in fact their lives and their actions proved that they cared nothing for God and His law and so had to be punished.

So today there are many who call themselves Christians and who do all the 'right' Christian things, but have never yet entered into peace with God through faith in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, and who have no knowledge or experience of the transforming power of the Spirit of God in their lives.

Before we can hope to do anything worthwhile in the crucial battles which must be fought on behalf of our country and its peoples in these days, we must make sure that we qualify to do battle for the King.

It is only the Children of God who measure up.

In the context of God's words to Solomon, we have the dire warning that if the nation should turn away from God, they would be punished in various ways. But with the warning is the promise that if they should then turn back to God and ask for help, they would be heard - but only on certain conditions.

The first of these is that those who call themselves His people should humble themselves before Him.

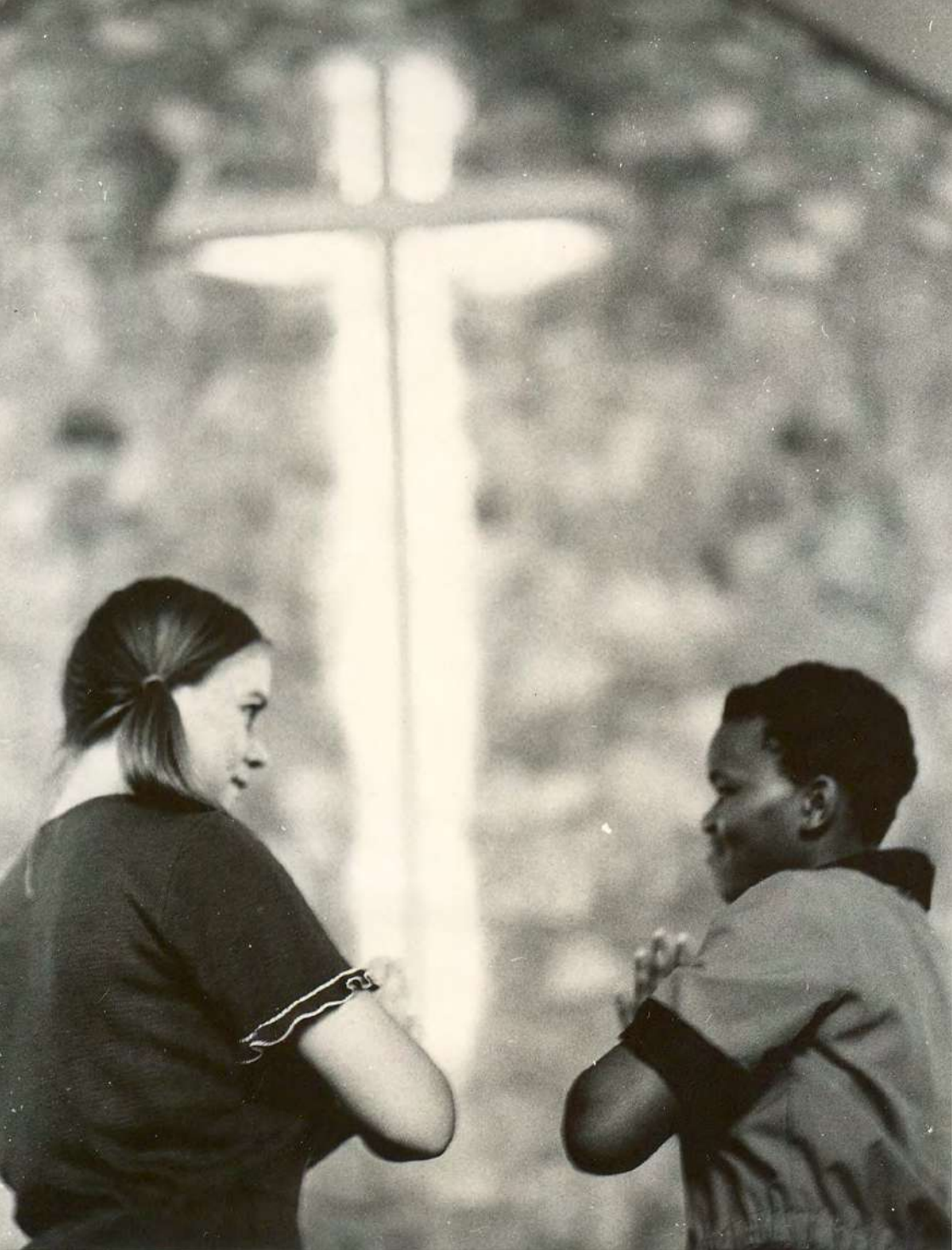
Now it is evident that most people have a pretty clear idea of what is implied here; the only problem is that our humbling of ourselves has been too short-lived. What God requires of us is not a brief once-in-a-while-when-we-are-forced-to-it kind of 'humbling' of oneself before God, but a through-going quality of life, an attitude of heart and mind, an honest assessment of who and what we are in relation to God and our fellow man;

"As a black man in South Africa I grew up with a deep feeling of inferiority. Various experiences in my childhood and my youth made me feel that I was a second-class human being - and there were some whites who made me feel that I was not human at all.

This produced a sense of frustration and strong resentment in my heart. I began to hate the white people who treated me in this way. Even more, I began to hate the God who made me as a black man.

But God is very good. He led me in a wonderful way to give my heart to Jesus Christ who loved me and gave Himself for me. I came to know the love of God for myself, and slowly I began to realise that I was not inferior to any other human being, and I also learned that I was not any better, for as a Zulu I had always prided myself on being a member of the royal tribe and so much better than any other black man.

Slowly the love of God made my heart soft, and I came to love and to accept all tribes and all races as being men and women that God has made, and for whom my Lord Jesus died."



Humility and love grow out of the acknowledgement of our own sin
and our experience of the mercy and love of God.

The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all of your being; but if there is no true humility before God, if you have never yet realised and acknowledged your need of His mercy and pardon, if you have not learned to be thankful for His grace, then there will be no real love of God in your life nor for your neighbour.

It is the sinful pride of our hearts that separates us from God and from our neighbour. The man or woman who has never yet truly humbled his heart before God and confessed his or her sin and received God's forgiveness, will find it difficult to set up a meaningful relationship with other people, especially those of other race groups.

There are many sections of Scripture which underline this, but two of our Lord's parables about arrogance are especially important :

“Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are or even as this publican. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:10-14.

His words to Simon the Pharisee are even more devastating; while Jesus sat at the table in Simon's house, a woman of the streets had come in. Standing behind Jesus, she had washed his feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with ointment. Simon had despised her in his heart and had looked down on our Lord for allowing her to touch Him. Then Jesus spoke to Simon:

“Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And turning to the woman, He said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

Luke 7:40 - 47.



Humility and love grow out of the acknowledgement of our own sin, and our experience of the mercy and love of God. Effective, prevailing prayer - the kind which we need in our country today - can only spring from a true humiliation before God.

A humiliation which will include Repentance as an essential ingredient.

“... and turn from their wicked ways...”

Have you ever noticed how things have changed in regard to the question of what sin is?

Our grandfathers, who were a hardy breed and had a healthy respect for the Word of God, subscribed to a set of stern and fundamental beliefs. They had to learn a long and exhaustive catechism off by heart, and they had a pretty clear idea of right and wrong. They knew the law of God and tried to keep it; they lived in mortal fear of the Seven Deadly Sins, Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger and Sloth, and no preacher worth his salt dared to miss these in his sermons.

But in our modern, permissive age, we no longer have any clear idea of right and wrong - the word ‘sin’ has largely lost its meaning today. Our modern theologians, who no longer regard the Bible as the ultimate standard of faith and practise have given us Existentialism and situational ethics in which anything goes ‘so long as no-one gets hurt’.

And they have reduced ‘sin’ to one thing only - Racism and no preacher worth his salt in today’s church will dare to miss denouncing this in his sermons.

But this means that too many churches are asking us to repent of the wrong things because Racism and Prejudice and Oppression and all the rest, wrong as they are, are all sins ‘of the second table’, they relate to our relationships with other human beings.

They are certainly sins, but not SIN.

SIN in its primary sense concerns our relationship with God. Its effects are seen in wrong relationships between people. SIN is a moral offense against a Holy God. The wilful refusal to obey the known will of God. A falling short of His standards.

A perversion of His good gifts. Rebellion against His authority. Transgression of His commandments and as such it must be punished or confessed and forsaken.



It is foolish to expect a man to be reconciled to his neighbour before he has been reconciled to God; you cannot expect him to stop ill-treating his neighbour while he is misusing almighty God! Until he has bowed in true repentance before the Father, humbly confessing his SIN against God and his sins against his fellow man and asking God's forgiveness, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to acknowledge his offenses against others.

"I was born and brought up in the Church. I went to Sunday school and was duly Confirmed in the church. I used to enjoy the youth fellowship meetings because we had a good crowd of teenagers together.

When I finished school I went off to the army for eighteen months. When I came back I got a job in Joh'burg and went to live in the YMCA there.

I used to go to church occasionally, but it began to bug me because the minister was always preaching politics and telling us how we should treat the blacks and pay them more and invite them into our homes and suchlike.

I got tired of it in the end and dropped out of going to church at all. Then I met this girl, and she got me to go to her church.

Right from the start I liked it there, it seemed such a friendly crowd of people. I started to go along of my own. The minister really preached the Gospel there. One night he made an appeal for any who wanted to be saved to stay behind. I went along and he prayed with me and helped me to take Jesus as my Saviour.

Well, somehow things began to change for me after that. I began to see the black men at work in a different way. I tried to witness to one of them, and found out that he is also a Christian.

We have some good talks together and discuss things out of the Bible.

I can see now that what that other minister had been saying was quite true, but he was starting at the wrong end. It was a waste of time trying to tell me how to treat the blacks before telling me how to get right with the Lord."

It is terribly wrong to concentrate too much attention onto one single aspect of wrong doing, to highlight one single sin and to ignore everything else, but to a large extent this is what is happening today. Unfortunately we have reached the stage where churches and Christian leaders have become so obsessed with racism and anything connected with black/white relationships that they cannot see the many other glaring evils which are bringing the wrath of God down upon our country.



"I have often heard it said that the whites and the blacks in South Africa do not understand each other because they are ignorant about one another's cultures. I do not think that this is altogether true. I believe that we black people have a much better understanding of the white culture than most whites realise. After all, it is the white culture that provides the films which we see, and the newspapers and the magazines and the books which we read.

We are also taught many of the subjects in the schools from the point of view of the white culture. That is why our people so easily and so quickly imitate the white culture."



We cannot avoid the question then, of just what are we giving them as worthy of imitation through these sources? How much will they learn of that which is good and pure and noble in the white man's culture from the films and the newspapers and the magazines and the kind of books which they are likely to read?

"Before I became a Christian I was what they call a tsotsi; I was a member of a big gang in Orlando and we used to do many bad things together.

I remember how we loved to go to the bioscope. They often show films in the halls in Soweto, and because they knew us and were afraid of us, many of the people used to let us in for nothing if we promised not to make any trouble.

We learned many bad things from those films, how to make knives and bad things, how to break into buildings and how to stop the burglar alarms and to fool the police... I do not go to the films now that I am a Christian because I do not want to see those bad things any more."

Sadly, the majority of whites in South Africa have become conditioned to accept the kind of things that are shown in our modern screen epics - drunkenness, gambling, violence, immorality, divorce, lying, stealing, cheating, and all of the very worst perversions of which human beings are capable, all presented as "realism", the normal, everyday kind of behaviour for 'average' people. And very few take the trouble to protest against them.

The newspapers in South Africa are a lively source of controversy; they seem to imagine that they will only be able to sell if they present a mixture of 'sex, sin and sensation.' It is not too much to say that they have done more to undermine the moral standards of our country than any other single medium through an open vendetta against the 'old fashioned' standards of purity and decency.

Nor are they innocent of the charge of stirring up racial tension through reporting which is often more biased and sensational than factual and objective.

"My husband says that he thinks that it is the newspapers that make our children go with the rioters.

Our son often reads the newspapers; I think that he gets them from his friends, because we cannot afford to buy the paper every day. He spends hours sometimes reading things, the political speeches and the things that are said about South Africa in other countries. I know that it makes him angry sometimes.

And the magazines also, he reads. Oh, sir, I am very unhappy about this. He looks at the pictures of the white women in those magazines and I know in my heart that he must get bad thoughts.

I do not think that it is right to sell such things."

Whenever the question of censorship has been raised, it has been notable that those in the forefront of the battle in favour of 'freedom of the press' have been the religious newspapers of our country and the church bodies - but there has not been a word to plead that our children and the unsophisticated peoples of our country should have freedom from the contaminating and degrading things which are so often given prominence in the press today.

By our silence, and also by the fact that so many Christians in South Africa buy and thereby support publications which are questionable, or degrading or even anti-Christian, we are sharing in their evil.

Because they are a simple and unsophisticated race, the blacks are still easily influenced by advertising. The commercial world is beginning to realise this and to try to capitalise on the vast market potential of the black people. Since they are only interested in promoting sales, the advertisers are not always very scrupulous, and will only present the most attractive side of their wares.

Now, for most things this does not matter all that much, but when it comes to potentially harmful and destructive products such as cigarettes and liquor, it is

a different thing altogether. South Africa has one of the highest alcohol consumption rates in the world. And one of the highest figures for alcoholism.

But efforts to raise support for a petition to limit the advertising of liquor and tobacco on television in South Africa received a very poor response...

Not many blacks are able to attend live theatre productions in the white cities of South Africa, and perhaps this is just as well, for a number of the plays which are being presented in our country today are degrading and even blasphemous.



**Happy days
and
True Beer.**



Made the way you make it at home.

An Indian businessman remarked once, after reading the review about a controversial play in Johannesburg which has been highly praised on all sides:

“I do not understand you Christians at all. You seem to be so strict and pedantic about your religion, and yet you allow a group of actors to present your Jesus Christ in such a way upon a public stage.

I can tell you that if anyone tried to do that to our Great Prophet, or were to use the sacred name of Allah as such people use the name of your God, there would be very serious consequences indeed.”

And so we could go on...

Listing all too many things which are openly allowed and propagated in this country which are destructive of human happiness and well-being as well as being completely contradictory to the Word of God.

The most serious of these, is of course the frighteningly rapid growth of demonism in its various forms of Spiritism, Black Magic, Fortune Telling and Satan worship.

It is no co-incidence that this is developing alongside the phenomenal growth of witchcraft and ancestor worship and primitive religion among the urban black peoples of our country.

It is one of the clearest evidences of the present satanic attack upon our country and the world... Films such as ‘Rosemary’s Baby’, ‘The Omen’, ‘The Exorcist’ and others which have raised such unhealthy interest in the subject of the occult in recent years are not merely the product of some of the film industry’s sick, money-mad minds...

Far from it, they are all indications that the spiritual battle for the control of this world has entered its most crucial stage. And Christians are doing very little about it. Now we must ask the most important question of all. What right do we have to expect God’s help in solving our problems or His protection from our enemies?

We should rather expect His judgement. For if God were to help us and protect us while we have such evils continuing unchecked and unreproached in our country, He would have to apologise to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

But there is mercy. . .

“If My people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear...”



There is mercy and pardon.

But the prerequisite is a sincere humbling of our hearts before God.

An honest acknowledgement of our individual and corporate sin against a Holy God and against our neighbours.

A wholehearted and thoroughgoing repentance, turning from sin and committing ourselves to cleaning up the country and above all, being willing to change our own lifestyle and our attitudes towards our neighbours.

But all of this is only preparatory to the real work, getting ready for the battle itself.

The work, the battle of Prayer.

Prayer such has seldom been heard in our country. Humble, agonising, beseeching prayer.

“If My people, which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my Face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” Do you remember the experience of Daniel?

He prayed earnestly for over three weeks before there was any evidence that his prayers had been heard, and only then did an angelic messenger come to him.

“Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words’ sake. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days...” Daniel 10:12,13a.

In the situation of spiritual conflict that we are facing today, there are superhuman, supernatural forces arrayed against us, powers which will certainly do all they can to hinder the prayers of mere mortals.

But the promise is there that prayer does work:

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit.” James 5:16b - 18.

What is needed is specific, earnest prayer on behalf of the people of Soweto and the townships, for the leaders of all sections of the country in these days for wisdom and guidance, but even more than this, that the powers of darkness may be overcome and men and women won to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord;

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1 - 4.



In other words,

If you are just going to be praying for peace so that you can go on living as before - forget it. If you are just going to be praying for peace so that your own safety is assured - forget it.

It will have to be much more positive than that if there is to be peace, it must be to allow us to opportunity to live in godliness and honesty so that men and women will find salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and will grow in the knowledge and obedience of the truth.

Are you concerned about Soweto and its peoples?

Do you realise that the eternal destiny of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children is at stake in that city?

Do you see that the future of our country, and of the 'free' world depends upon whether Christ or Antichrist is victorious in this part of the world?

Do you believe that only the wisdom of God can solve the problems of Soweto, and that only the power of God can transform the lives of all who are involved in the situation, thereby bringing about "*meaningful change*" in our land?

Then you will be willing to begin fulfilling the conditions that God has laid down for a glorious transformation and you will begin to pray earnestly and effectively. And God will begin to heal our land.

There will be such revival as the world has not yet seen. Indescribable scenes of reconciliation between husbands and wives, parents and children, blacks and whites.

A pretty dream?

Not at all; simply a restatement of what is promised so clearly in the passages we have referred to.

God's promises are yea and amen, all we have to do is to add practical faith.

- To fulfil the conditions.
- To pray through to the victory.
- To work it out in the situation.

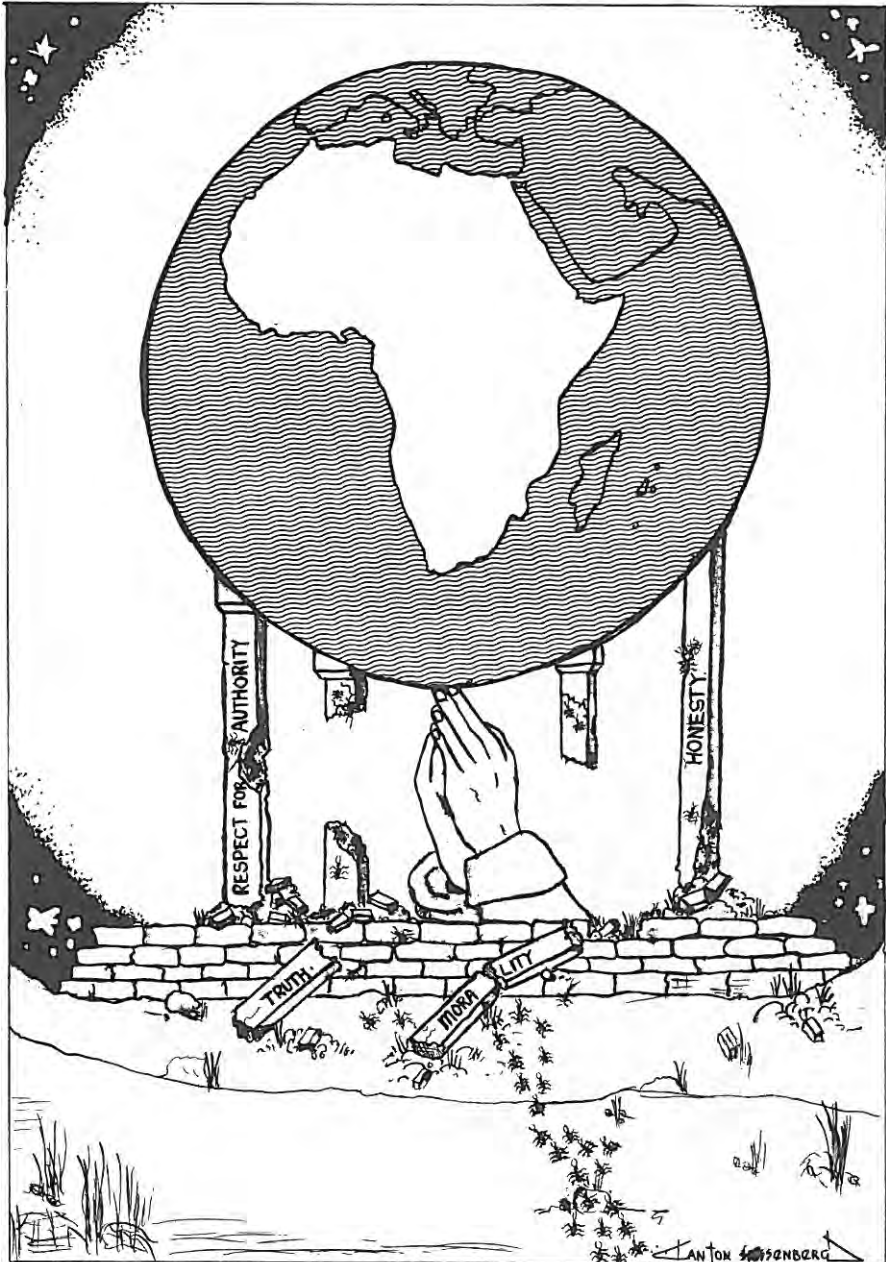
That last bit is as important as the rest.

Because if you are serious about this, and you're really willing to do something about the Problem of Soweto then it will cost you something.

It will cost tears of repentance and the humbling step of reconciliation. It will cost time and effort in effectual fervent prayer.

It will cost time and effort and money in getting the job done.

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Romans 10:12 - 14.



If there is to be Healing in our land, the only way that it can come is through Revival.

And if such a Revival is to come, and if it is to penetrate into every level of our heterogeneous, sick society, there will have to be many more Spirit- filled preachers and workers.

We give God thanks that there are some fine and godly men and women already at work in Soweto and in many of the urban black areas of our country, preaching the Word of God without fear or compromise and challenging men and women in the streets and in their homes to commit their lives to Christ.

But they are too few for these vast multitudes.

A meaningful and practical approach to the problems of these areas demands that we will pray earnestly and urgently for God to thrust forth labourers into these fields which are so ready for harvesting.

But more than that, if we are to be realistic, we are going to have to do more than ever before to make it possible for such workers to be trained and supported.

Their upkeep. Equipment. Transport. Literature. Radio. Etc.

Of course it will cost money and it will demand real sacrifices from God's people.

But tell me!

Which would you rather pay for in this situation, Christian workers and Bibles for new converts or Bullets for soldiers' guns?

These are the weapons that God has given to His people that they may be victorious in His battles. These are the only weapons that will have any effect whatsoever in this, the last and greatest battle of human history.

- Humble Christian living.
- Prayer.
- Repentance.
- Sacrifice .

The victory in Soweto...
 in Africa. . .
 in the World.

Depends on... YOU.

For all that is needed for evil to triumph
 is... Nothing

Dorothea-Nuus

Dorothea-News

Orgaan van die Dorothea-sending. — Organ of the Dorothea Mission.

Kwartier: „Eulogie,” Lawleystraat 37, Waterkloof, Pretoria.

Headquarters: "Eulogie," 37, Lawley Street, Waterkloof, Pretoria.



Johannesburg

Riots

LOVE CONQUERS

The recent riots in Johannesburg were a tragedy! May God save our dear country from further violence and bloodshed! The results of riots are awful as the bottom (left) picture grimly tell.

Also the Dorothea Mission suffered loss from the spirit of lawlessness, for one night our large tent was burnt down. In a matter of minutes it was in ashes—a total loss. The evangelists were sleeping in the tent, and thank God, their lives were spared. Men in the vicinity who saw the danger of the evangelists, rushed to their assistance—they and their possessions were saved.

And in the loss God once again was good, unspeakably good. The evangelists were now without shelter. But immediately offers came from kind native men and women to give them beds and food. Once again the words of our Lord Jesus were proved to be true: "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matth. 6: 26). Jesus fulfils His promises to those who "SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Matth. 6: 33).

To this day we do not know who burnt down the tent. But our workers made it their special aim to befriend the many young men. It was not easy at first, for many of these did not love us, nor like our presence in their midst, as is indicated by the fact that the tent was burnt. But love conquers, and our hearts truly rejoice that some who would not come near at first, have been won by the love of Christ in the hearts of the workers manifested towards them. The spirit in which the workers (European and Bantu) took the loss of the tent, must have made a very deep impression on them. It was the Spirit of Christ.

In the bottom (right) picture Mr. Joubert, Mr. van Niekerk and Mr. Kuns are seen with a band of Tsoetse. On the large picture (left) the captain of this band is seen, and a member of his band. The Editor had the joy of speaking to these young men about our wonderful Lord Jesus, and it was clearly evident that the friendship of Mr. Kuns, Mr. Joubert and Mr. van Niekerk, and of our Bantu evangelists, has deeply influenced them. When the tent was first pitched there it was not possible to speak thus to them about our Lord and Saviour!

Shall we not all pray for this captain and his band and for many, many thousands such young Bantu men in our South African locations that Christ may conquer their hearts? May

(Contd. on page 4)



The Challenge of Soweto

Mr. H. von Staden BSc.

As Mr. Gittens has indicated in his preface to this book, Soweto is indeed very near to my soul. I have had a great burden for this place and its peoples for many years now, and it is to me also a finger pointing to the other millions of black people living in the urban areas of South Africa, who are likewise our burden.

When the riots began in Soweto on 16th June 1976, they spread across South Africa like a veld fire. Similarly a revival in Soweto would spread all over.

That was in the year 1942 when God called the Dorothea Mission to work in the black townships of South Africa. At that time many of them were terrible squatters' settlements. The slum conditions were indescribable. Almost from the beginning the area which today is known as Soweto was our main mission field - our number one target.

Unforgettable to this day remain to me our early campaigns. Some of our missionaries who worked in those crusades, like Messrs. Hannes Joubert and Ananias Hiamuhona, Misses Jane Dube, Rosa Kuhn and Marie Young, are still with us today. They dared all for Christ in order to rescue precious souls from the deep mire of sin. There were hardly any other missionary activities in those slum areas at that time, and the Dorothea workers rightly deserved the name of "*pioneers*".

The Soweto of those days - just as in our time - presented a tremendous challenge. Surely, it was a case of SOWETO? impossible!

BUT GOD!

The Bible tells us that "*where sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly*" Romans. 5:20. This we experienced daily. Sin in all of its many different manifestations was rampant, indeed. It was of a revolting kind and of overwhelming extent, as could possibly only be in such primitive, overcrowded living conditions. When returning from there, we sometimes felt sick for days on end. But the grace of God far surpassed all that was discouraging, distressing and disgusting.

Someone said: "*There is more in Jesus to make us glad than in all the world to make us sad.*" This was certainly our experience also with regard to those early campaigns and so it is to this day.



Moroka, 1948.



Open-air supermarket, Newclare 1950.

A whole book could be written just about the marvellous conversions which, by God's grace, our workers witnessed in those early days. Sinners from every walk of life - witch-doctors, drunkards, gamblers, the women of the street and many others - recognised their lost condition and embraced the salvation that is in Christ. Of course, it was a battle for every soul to be rescued from the angry grip of Satan, but there were many who came to the great Friend of publicans and sinners (Matthew 11:19). Christ went after His lost sheep until He found them. Yes, we learnt to know Him gloriously triumphant. And we loved our Saviour more deeply than ever before and grew increasingly confident in His absolute victory on the cross.

And so it is still today. He still seeks them.

He is still almighty to deal with the souls also of the Soweto of the late seventies. ***"All power hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth"*** Matthew 28 :18.

But He needs human hands and feet and lips in His search for these souls.

He needs men and women not only to go and tell the glad tidings of *"Come to Jesus! Jesus Saves!"* but above all, to pray and intercede.

Not all can go, but all can pray. One of the chief aims of this book has been to stimulate a new urge among Christians in South Africa to pray earnestly for the extension of Christ's kingdom among the masses of Soweto. Indeed, it is a solemn challenge, and whether we heed or neglect it will go far to determine not only Soweto's but also South Africa's future. And the challenge comes to every South African, regardless of status and race. When we pray the plans of the evil one are sure to fail.

Some of those early converts have become powerful servants of Christ through whom many others were rescued from the way of perdition. One of them is the Rev. Shadrack Maloka. He had never known his parents, and, in his own words, grew up almost like an animal. He lived in Moroka, which, at that time, was one of the worst squatters' settlements of that area.

It was Christmas-time. Attired in a woman's dress and in a drunken condition, he walked through the alleyways and shouted *"Happy Christmas!"* to the people. His only pals were the members of his widely feared tsotsi gang.

Workers of the Dorothea Mission drove through Moroka and announced a meeting that was to be held in their tent in the evening. A film was to be shown - free of charge! Shadrack Maloka (His name at the time was *"Mohanoë"*, which means "the rejected one", because he had been rejected by his parents) was delighted about the prospects of attending a free film show. He loved films with plenty of shooting and killing.



God Protected the Dorothea Mission Tent

The scene of devastation at Albertynville is just two miles from where our Gospel tent was pitched at the time in Moroka. Indeed, hardly an hour before the tornado struck we were engaged in holding an open-air meeting in Moroka, about a mile from Albertynville. As Evangelist Isaac preached great storm clouds gathered, and soon we had to run for shelter. Some of the workers who were the last to leave the area actually saw the tornado rush snake-wise through the air. The direction in which it came made them believe the tent would be directly hit. But God was gracious, it swerved off again, and struck down two miles away at Albertynville. That the tornado did not strike our tent was a

demonstration of God's goodness and divine protection. And we believe it shows how God has more than once ward off the intentions of evil men who hate the Gospel and the presence of the tent and the Dorothea workers (and other preachers) in the locations! It encourages us to pray to God and trust Him for protection in times of danger of whatever kind! For we have been in danger: once a tornado actually struck the tent in a Pretoria location and totally wrecked it in a very few moments.

Another time, in the middle of the night, when wrecked our tent by putting fire to it where it was pitched in a Johannesburg location. Both times God was gracious in that, though the two tents were totally lost (many hundreds of pounds damage!), no worker was hurt. Each time the evangelists were camping in the tent, and in the case of the fire they were fast asleep, it being midnight! But not a scratch or single came to them. How wonderful are God's promises!

"HE THAT DWELLETH IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY. I WILL SAY OF THE LORD, HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS: MY GOD, IN WHOM I TRUST. FOR HE SHALL DELIVER THEE FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER, AND FROM THE NOISOME PESTILENCE, HE SHALL COVER THEE WITH HIS PINIONS, AND UNDER HIS WINGS SHALT THOU TAKE REFUGE: HIS TRUST IS A SHIELD AND A BUCKLER. THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID FOR THE TERROR BY NIGHT, NOR FOR THE ARROW THAT FLEETH BY DAY. FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER THEE, TO KEEP THEE IN ALL THY WAYS." (Ps. 91:1-5, 11.)

These promises are real, and are meant by God for today for those who will trust

Onbeskryflike Verwoesting

Waar die lewensgevaar in 'n velle oerke die bewys gegee het, het nie 'n enkele huis staande gebleef nie. Die verwoesting was ontzettend. So erg was die krag van die wind, dat die dakplaat van die daaks afgeval en versprei was op die grond. Daar was die kragte in van swak bewysings, en het natuurlik maklik in- en uitgeval, maar selfs stuwingsgeboue skandende kon die verskrikte drukking nie weerstaan nie, en het meegestort. Hierdie bevestiging en 'n aansel sterf-gevalle is gegee. Dat die dodelike nie baie groot was nie, is deur God se genade te midde van die onbegrip. Insinkering het die mure gewel, dat hulle plat op die grond sou val. Die mure moedlik onder hulle en salde. Een van die hulle

kinders gered deur hulle onder 'n bed te plaas, maar sywel het die lew ingesket (te die hulle op haar vormkarsak het voordat sy kon uitkom).

Om die ellende nog erger te maak, was die vrees voorvoriggans en vore gevore deur swaar storme, tot die dodelike mure - die hulle besonder en sterwende ingestalt - nie 'n droe draad aan hulle liggende gelid het nie. Die hulle redders, soos die dokters, verpleegsters, draers ens., wat in die donker oor die pun hulle weg moet gaan, het in alle vol water, onskoonheid, die wat en sommige dodelike omgelyng is, geval. Soos 'n kan swaag, was daar die verskrikte verwarring en ellende. Oral kon mens die uitroep en gekom van die besonder, die sterwende,

en die wat tot die dood toe beange was, hoor. Hulle is onder die pun begrawe en 'n mens kan jou hulle noodkrete om hulp in die donker voornel, soos hulle moedlik dit vir die reddingswerkers was om vas te stel waar hulle was, en hulle dan tot veiligheid te bring voordat hulle bevestig begrawe en gedood word deur verdere instortings van die reën-darwette en wankelende mure.

Die onse van hyling, die uitgestrektheid van die skade en verwoesting, die verwoest en oorbluffte skare, die verdriet en smart kan eenvoudig nie beskryf word nie. Dit het ons laat dink aan party soeke wat in die boek Opestering beskryf word.

Wie twyfel daaraan dat God tot die volk van Suid-Afrika, en in besonder tot die Naturelobesvolke, gesprek het? Te meer sng was dit dadelik toe 'n voorspelde storm 'n ander Rande fokasie (wie die latel geel en dangelike verwoesting aan-gebring het). As ons Bantoevolking volk dat hulle onse is, dan het hulle nog geen regte oensk tot narm deur nood en misdaad nie. Daar is 'n beter weg: "SALIG IS DIE SAGMOEDIGES, WANT HULLE SAL DIE AARDE RIJWE. SALIG IS DIE VREDI-MAKERS, WANT HULLE SAL KINDERS VAN GOD GENUOM WORD" (Matth. 5: 4, 9).

Die, van die Dorothea-land - en, wie was Christuswerkers en gelovig in Suid-Afrika - dank God dat dit ons dink is om die Evangelie van verlossing te bring aan hulle mense. Om dink aan die Holland se woorde: "MAAR SOEK EERS DIE KONINKRYK VAN GOD EN SY VERBODENHEID, EN AL HIERIN DINGE SAL VIR JULIE BYGEVOEG WORD" (Matth. 6: 33). As ons een pily en die Evangelie in verkondig, jakom sal ons Gode met in ons hand gelykheid met, met dars. "Lest die regte van Albertynville een omdaanske dat hulle

The car in which a man was travelling along the national road, which skirts Albertynville, was hurled off the road and deposited hundreds of yards away in the field, a total wreck. Such was the force of the storm.



GEESTELIKE CHAOS TE ALBERTYNSVILLE

Die geestelike chaos is nog renger dan die wat deur die tornado veroorsaak is. Een van die open was daar gewerk tot na die groot storm skree.

Nieuwjaar 13 Albertynville was 'n baie dramatiese in met 'n een op, het in die Dale ophang mense om die spate woorde. Daar was 'n groep en die hulle regens het omdaanske en mure geword, en later het hulle alomteenwoordig raak na om buig. Hulle het omdaanske en kope opgetu en ons mense met die Gode van mense laat spate. 'n Waarna verwoesting

But what a different film he saw! It was about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Afterwards the Gospel was preached. “*Mohanoe*” was struck in the depth of his being. Never before had he heard of a loving Father in heaven who gave His only Son to die for man’s sins - and also for his sins! In fact, he had not known that he was a sinner. That night, however, the Spirit of God convicted him of his lost condition. Right there and then he knelt down and confessed his sins and received Christ as Saviour. He rose from his knees a completely changed person.

As he stepped out of the tent he reached into his pockets and threw away his cigarettes and his dagga. He was given the strength to break immediately with various other sins to which he had been enslaved, and he started witnessing for the Lord. He had never been to school, but the Dorothea workers gave him tracts. He went from door to door to offer tracts to people and tell them what Christ had done for him.

Shortly afterwards he felt called to the Bible School of the Dorothea Mission. He arrived wearing a pair of short trousers and a shirt - all the clothing he possessed. Upon his arrival he was given his first decent clothing. He made amazing progress with his studies. Soon he learned to read and write and quickly mastered various languages. Today he speaks ten languages fluently and has served the Lord in several countries of Southern Africa. His testimony has also made an abiding impression overseas.

Rev. Shadrack Maloka’s life is but one example of the transforming power of the Gospel. In those early and difficult days we often held open-air meetings. Well do I remember one Sunday afternoon when I preached at such a meeting. We were surrounded by a crowd of aggressive young people. They peppered me with questions. Mainly it came down to this: “*Do you love us?*” I said with honesty, from my heart: “*Yes, I love you, or I would not stand here on a Sunday afternoon.*” They said something to the effect that if I really loved them, I would go to parliament and make laws that would change their present condition of misery.

I replied that it is not all that simple to get into parliament and even if I should be successful my efforts to improve conditions might fail. Moreover, whatever advantages I might gain for them - like lovely houses and other earthly privileges - they themselves would still be left spiritually bankrupt. I explained that I preferred to give my time and energy to help them find the Lord Jesus Christ and to obtain a mansion one day in heaven.



Where are they all going to?

I challenged these young people: *“Is an eternal home in Heaven not more important to you?”* God was with me. They were silent, and I understood it as their agreement with my words. They then listened intently as I preached to them about the Love of God. Moreover, our Saviour’s Words are always true: *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you”* Matthew 6:33.



As soon as they could, the authorities did step in to put an end to the slum conditions. Simple but decent houses were built in Soweto and other townships - one may say by the hundreds of thousands in the course of time. And yet, the spiritual need has remained unchanged.

Through the years we continued our evangelistic campaigns, and we received much love from the people of Soweto. It has always been a tonic for one's soul to meet our Christian friends there.

There were unruly elements also, to be sure! I remember in particular a case of wonderful Divine protection during a riot in one of the old locations.

The tent had been pitched opposite a crèche, and although things had seemed calm enough when permission was given for the campaign, the workers soon realised that tension was growing rapidly amongst the people.

Crowds of Africans began parading up and down past the tent, shouting slogans and brandishing defiant salutes. A group of young men ran up to the tent with flaming torches and set it on fire. The workers realised that it was time to retreat. As they got into their vehicle and began to drive towards the exit of the township, stones rained upon them, but by God's grace, only one of them was struck, and that not seriously.

When I heard the news, I travelled at once to the place and joined the workers in a week of earnest prayer which was held in the garage of a dear friend. We kept on asking the authorities for permission to return to the location, but it was only about 8 days after the riots began that we were finally given permission.

We were told that we were the first white people to go in, not even the white policemen had been into the area; but we found that some Indian shopkeepers had preceded us. This spoke very forcibly to my heart, because they had done this for the sake of money and earthly possessions, whilst we were doing it for the sake of precious souls.

I will never forget how we stood on the ruins of the tent - only the poles had not been reduced to ashes - and gave thanks to God and preached the Gospel of God's love to the crowds milling past. Only a few stragglers stood still to listen, the rest were too afraid. But God gave us a mighty blessing as a result of these riots, and many souls were won to the Lord Jesus Christ, many of whom we know to be still standing for Jesus Christ today.

Here, as so many times before and since, we proved the truth of the verse: ***"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."*** Psalm 34:7.



Many years ago, in April 1958, God gave me an unforgettable experience which led me to trust Him for a decisive triumph of the Gospel in Soweto. As I drove through one of these townships, I came to a halt on a hill. As far as my eye could wander I saw nothing but rows and rows of houses. I was overwhelmed by the sight of this vast mission field. I knew that I stood in the heart of the greatest concentration of black people not only in South Africa - but in the whole world.

As I stood there alone and prayed for these multitudes, I felt challenged by God with the question: *"My child, will you trust Me for a decisive victory of the Gospel among these masses?"*

I returned home with a tremendous battle waging in my soul. It seemed so impossible to trust God thus. For a number of days I passed through a severe inner conflict, resulting in physical distress and almost in a breakdown. At long last, by God's grace, I could say a whole-hearted "yes" to this question. Peace filled my soul and soon I felt physically restored.

At that time, of course, there were no thoughts, let alone signs of riots. Almost two decades later, on 2nd March 1977, God gave me another unforgettable experience in Soweto.

It was the first time that I entered this place again after the riots which had begun so suddenly on 16th June 1976. Until that day, "Soweto" was a little-known word even in South Africa. With the outbreak of the riots, however, the news media splashed this word all over the globe. South Africa used to be known for her gold; then Soweto became even more prominent in world news.

On 2nd March 1977, I was invited to attend a convert's prayer-meeting in Soweto. For a long time, owing to the unrest, it was not possible for our white workers to enter there, but for this occasion the authorities granted a permit. I saw the gutted buildings which had been destroyed by fire and the many burnt-out car and bus wrecks as we travelled along those streets.

I had expected that just a handful of converts would come. To my amazement, the spacious garage which served as our meeting place, was filled to capacity. There was an opportunity for testimonies. Although the meeting lasted for many hours, there was not enough time for all who wished to testify. Each one was aflame for God. When I listened to what these believers had experienced during the riots - when their lives were in peril for Christ's sake and how He had protected them - tremendous joy filled my soul.

I realized that these Christians had experienced something that I myself knew little or nothing about, and of which I have never yet heard from any whites in South Africa. They were prepared to suffer unto death for their Master's sake,



and some would probably have been present in our prayer meeting had they not actually died in the riots. I recognised this to be one of the greatest days of my life.

That prayer meeting brought me the closest I have yet come to revival. I cannot doubt that this was part of the answer to the prayer for a decisive victory of the Gospel among the masses of Soweto which was born in my soul when, in 1958, I stood on that

lonely hill with this unique mission field spread out before me. To come back to the riots: for a long time after 16th June 1976, I felt inwardly paralysed.

Never had I recognised the spiritual need of the people of Soweto as on that day and afterwards - yet, we could no longer enter there for tent campaigns! (Our work in Soweto, thank God, continues through personal visitation, mostly with the help of our black fellow-workers.)

Yet, it remains an inward agony that our fruitful work for the Master through



tent campaigns (as well as the work of other Missions and Churches) cannot be resumed. No longer can we have our annual Birthday Rally and Week of Prayer there - meetings which had been wonderfully blessed of God, and to which we used to invite some of the world's finest evangelists as speakers.

How well I remember, for instance, the day when Dr. Gerhard Bergmann, probably the best known

evangelist in West Germany, was our guest speaker. After the meeting, whilst the thousand or more visitors were enjoying refreshments, he spoke to me and said: *“Dies ist die Front!”* (*“This is the Front!”*).

The reason for the agony of soul since 16th June 1976, was that Satan had seemingly obtained a victory. God graciously comforted us and opened other doors for campaigns - but the heart-break of Soweto remained.

With that agony I lived for about a year. Then suddenly it was as if the Lord was speaking to me from Romans 8:28: ***“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God...”***

I said: *“Lord, it says ‘all things.’ That must also mean Soweto and what has taken place there.”* He seemed to answer: *“Yes, my child, that is just how it is.”*

Now I am on victory ground. I no longer regard the terrible things that have happened in Soweto and the present situation as an irremediable setback, but as part of God’s greater plan. He has endless ways of producing eternal blessing from seeming defeat!

If every believer in South Africa, and many elsewhere in the world, would make Soweto a prayer target - if we would pray through - then surely God would manifest His power far more mightily than in the past. ***“Call unto Me, and I will answer thee and will show thee great things and difficult, which thou knowest not.”*** Jeremiah 33 : 3.

What is the real issue in Soweto? We recognise that there is a political side as well as a social aspect. There are administrative, educational and other serious problems. Yet, there is something far deeper than all this. Surely, all the violence, hatred and antagonism indicate in depth a spiritual issue. The powers of darkness are mobilising! The greatest need is a break- through in the invisible world - a victory for the Cross of Calvary.

If we want to lose Soweto and reap catastrophe it is quite easy, all we have to do is to stop praying! My inward paralysis as described above was a brake on my prayer for Soweto. By mighty, prevailing prayer we can, however, obtain the victory. ***“The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available - dynamic in its working”*** James 5:16b ANT.

Soweto presents this urgent prayer challenge to every Christian in South Africa.

There have been illustrious examples of the power of prayer in our time. When South Korea was threatened by a Marxist take-over, thousands of South Koreans gathered in churches in the darkness of early morning, at 5.00am, even in the bitter cold of winter, to cry to God before proceeding

The demo that boiled over



It was happy-go-lucky as the demo got under way — but soon after this picture was taken violence flared and people were killed



to work at 7.00am. Communism was halted, and until today South Korea is free, with freedom of religion.

True, American soldiers and others, including South Africans, together fought and won against North Korean communist military might - but the real secret of victory was in the prayers of the simple South Korean believers.

In South Vietnam there was no such prayer, and she was overrun by communist North Vietnam.

The military might of America had to withdraw in ignominious confusion.

Could South Africa not become another and even more illustrious example of God's intervention? It may depend on you and I. We may be another South Korea - rather than a South Vietnam, if we fulfil the spiritual conditions.

When God through the prophet Jonah declared that Nineveh, that wicked city, was to be overthrown (Jonah 3:4), her people repented and cried to God (Jonah 3:5 - 9) and the result was that, mystery above mysteries: God repented and Nineveh was spared!

Could our country not become another such example? My whole soul says "yes", and I give myself to repentance and intercession.

What does your soul say?

If we respond correctly and spiritually, there is hope. South Africa (all races) will be spared and we shall be a blessing to Africa and the world.

In the final resort the issue is not between white and black, but between a free South Africa (all races) and the devilish bondage of dictatorial Marxism. The tragic events in Soweto since June, 1976, are but a step in the master plan towards communist take-over in South Africa. That we must remedy social, political, educational and all other grievances with all possible speed is essential. But to think that such remedial action will stop the communist intention of subjugating South Africa is a foolish dream. The only final safety for our land is God! The war is primarily a spiritual one, and Soweto is a pivotal front. Our only infallible weapon is Prayer.

Shall we unite in prayer for a mighty victory of the Gospel in Soweto? Let us pray for a decisive act of God - yes, for nothing less than Revival! But the revival must not be only in Soweto - no, it must be throughout South Africa! Surely, if there had been many more true intercessors, God would already have intervened in Soweto. Did He not through those terrible events tell us there is a dearth of Prayer Warriors? Can we doubt it that He permitted the tragedy of 16th June 1976 and the events which have taken place since then to bring us to our knees to pray for revival among all races in our land?



Soweto's "National Pastime" - Soccer!

Then there will be great new prayer power. And the united beseechings to heaven of many will wrest Soweto from the perilous grip of the powers of darkness.

In revival God is near, and His presence in Christ is the light that is needed to understand and solve all problems which are too complicated for men to deal with. ***“I am the light of the world: He that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life”*** John 8:12. Instead of human efforts there will be Divine Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit will work glad willingness in men’s hearts to obey. It is again a case of Matthew 6:33: ***“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”***

A spiritual awakening is our greatest need.

A revival like that of South Korea will ensure South Africa a future. It is our final hope.

Satan initiated a grave attack on South Africa via Soweto in June of 1976. The reasons given by the rioters (whether real or untrue) were not the deeper and fundamental cause. In the ultimate it was a devilish stab against freedom of religion. It is a spiritual issue; and there in Soweto Satan must come to realise anew that Christ has triumphed on Calvary over all his evil works. It is only by way of Revival that this will be assured.

The day of the riots is a watershed day in our history. The deathly dagger of Marxism, aimed at the heart of our dear land with the freedom of worship which we enjoy, and the missionary activity which is carried on both within our borders and beyond, on that day came ominously nearer to its target. We believe that the prayers of God’s people prevented more calamitous events than even the very serious things which did take place there and which are still continuing. But although the worst was prevented, South Africa is certainly not the same as before that dark date - one of the most far- reaching in all our history.

The only adequate answer is a spiritual awakening through an increased volume of earnest pleadings with God.

It must surely be that as the Holy Spirit begins to work in Soweto, it will be an enormous stimulus for God’s people in this land to pray more and more intensely - until the enemy is routed on the spiritual battlefield and the dagger is withdrawn as took place in South Korea.

Soweto is the door to Africa through which Marxism came in on June 16th, 1976. It can be the only backdoor for its ignominious exit.



In South Korea the threat of a Marxist take-over from the communist North Korea is ever present - especially as America weakens and becomes more and more conciliatory towards the communists. But the believers in that country know full well that only their prayers prevail to keep their land free. If their effectual intercession slackens, they will be lost.

This is the pattern for South Africa! Our immediate need is revival. God can and will give it, if we pray like Isaiah: ***“Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence... to make Thy Name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence.”*** Isaiah 64:1,2.

Revival in Soweto and South Africa would, no doubt, also have an impact on Africa and, because we are so much in the limelight, it would be a witness to people of many nations around the world.

Relatively few readers of this book would ever have the opportunity to work for Christ in Soweto or in the other black urban areas where the spiritual challenge is much the same. But every reader who is a born-again child of God and has a passion for lost souls can pray. Said one saint: *“The direct power of prayer is, in a sense, omnipotent. Prayer moves the Hand that moves the world. What battles has it not fought! What victories has it not won! ... It is the hand that strikes down Satan and breaks the fetters of sin. It turns the scales of fate more than the edge of the sword, the craft of statesmen or the weight of sceptres. Prayer has discharged heaven’s frowning and darkest cloud in a shower of blessing.”*

And to quote our Lord Jesus Christ in one of His many promises concerning prayer: ***“If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.”*** John 15:7.

Has there ever been a time when it was more imperative for every believer to abide in Christ? It is those who abide in Him who have the power to move the Hand that moves the world.’

The question that rises in any parent’s heart at a moment like this is always, “What will become of him? What will he be when he grows up?”

The answer to that question, and to so many others does not depend upon blind chance, for we have to do with a Heavenly Father who has an intense personal interest in each one of His creatures. . .

In His wisdom He has seen fit to entrust a vital part of the running of this world into the hands of His children...

It is through Prayer that the hinges of history are turned. . .

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. For what are men better than sheep or goats, that nourish a blind life within the brain, if knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer both for themselves and those who call them friend? For so the whole round world is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God." Lord Tennyson, *Mort d'Arthur*.

Our all-too brief glimpse at Soweto is thus concluded.

But whether this is the end or the beginning will depend upon your response to the challenge which Soweto presents to all of God's people.





"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded ..."*

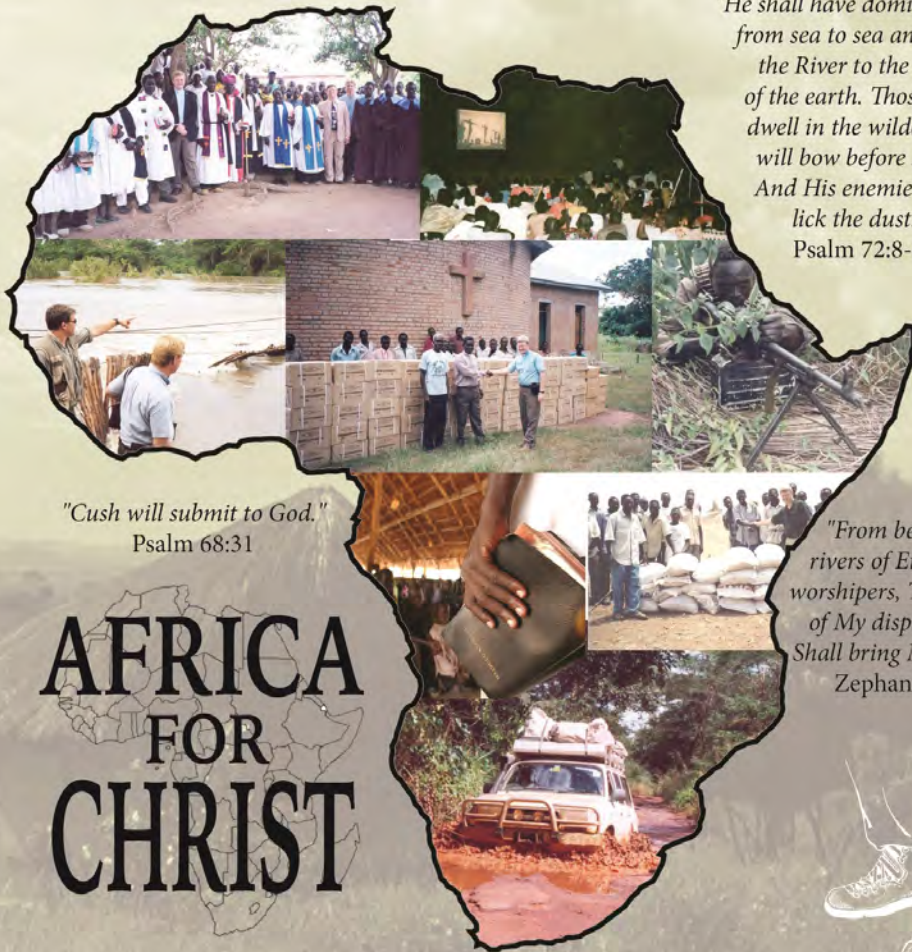
Matthew 28:18-20

*"...The harvest truly is plentiful,
but the labourers are few. Therefore,
pray the Lord of the harvest to send out
labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38*

PRAY FOR AFRICA

*"He shall have dominion also
from sea to sea and from
the River to the ends
of the earth. Those who
dwell in the wilderness
will bow before Him,
And His enemies will
lick the dust."*

Psalm 72:8-9



"Cush will submit to God."

Psalm 68:31

AFRICA FOR CHRIST

*"From beyond the
rivers of Ethiopia, My
worshippers, The daughter
of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering."
Zephaniah 3:10*



*"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those
in Heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth and that every
tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Philippians 2:10-11

**“Lenin said that the road to
Europe lies through Africa...
Well, the road to Africa runs
through Soweto!”**



**Dr. G. M. E. Leistner,
Director of the Africa Institute**